



Hulsey Yard

Neighborhood Master Plan

CABBAGETOWN • INMAN PARK • OLD FOURTH WARD • REYNOLDSTOWN

October 2019

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The Stacks Lofts



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Background & Context

INTRODUCTION

Hulsey Yard is a former intermodal transfer facility owned by CSX Transportation located between the historic Atlanta neighborhoods of Cabbagetown, Inman Park, Old Fourth Ward and Reynoldstown. The 78-acre site spans the distance between two MARTA rail stations, borders two Historic Districts, and is bisected by the Atlanta Beltline corridor. Given its existence as an industrial site for over a century, its potential transformation to other uses has huge implications for countless residents and businesses surrounding it. The local and regional implications of redeveloping this massive railroad yard are almost too numerous to conceive.

This grassroots-led planning effort was borne out of the collective neighborhoods’ love for their community and fueled by a legacy of neighborhood activism and advocacy. Its core principles grew out of collaboration between thousands of energetic residents and stakeholders. The plan represents a consensual vision for Hulsey Yard’s redevelopment that is grounded in the realities of current real estate and market trends yet pushes the envelope in terms of interconnectedness, build quality, affordability and architecture. We hope it can serve as a guide for planning and designing what is currently perhaps the most dynamic redevelopment site in Atlanta.



1920s/1930s photo of Hulsey Yard looking west towards the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill. In the foreground left are passenger rail cars which were stored in the yard when not in use. (Source: AJC Archives)

SITE HISTORY

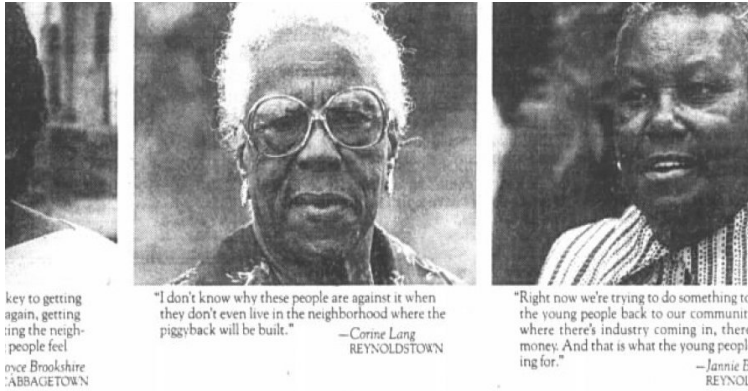
Railroads, Cotton & Piggyback

Detailed historical records of Hulsey Yard are limited. Generally, its beginnings are related to railroad expansion that occurred in Atlanta throughout the mid-1800s along with the establishment and growth of the nearby Atlanta Rolling Mill. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicate substantial railroad activity and growth around the site between 1886 and 1911. As a major hub of a growing cotton industry, the mill evolved into the “Fulton Cotton Spinning Company”, later “Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill” and now Fulton Cotton Mill Lofts/The Stacks. Much of the current site (especially the eastern portions of the site) were once occupied by residential neighborhoods and a portion of Sugar Creek.

Although the history of the name “Hulsey Yard” is not entirely clear, its origin likely comes from land owned by the family of William Henry Hulsey (1838-1909). W.H. Hulsey served as the 18th Mayor of Atlanta, founded the Atlanta Public School System, served two terms in the Georgia General Assembly and later served as a Fulton County Judge. Early railroad workers referenced “Hulsey Junction” (1904, 1911 AJC Archives) as a key landmark along the growing railroad line near the Atlanta Joint Terminal. In the 1920s a large portion of adjacent land owned by L.J. Hulsey - son of W.H. Hulsey - was sold for railroad-



1927 Atlanta Journal-Constitution article referencing sale of Hulsey land for “industrial development” (image: AJC Archives)



Piggyback will be good for Atlanta!

...of truck trailers on railroad flatcars, is one of today's most economically important shipping... southeast's transportation hub. town and by continuing over the years ail, highway, and airport facilities, the east's transportation hub. Converting existing Hulsey Yard from a purely a modern piggyback loading and nsure our city's leadership role in much quieter than regular switching movements. Conver Hulsey Yard would drastically reduce the number of diesel tives used there, significantly reducing noise and air pollut Limited street traffic. Truck access to and from the piggyback facilities would be to a short 700-yard corridor along Boulevard, between Int 20 and Hulsey Yard. At present, the traffic count in the cc about 16,000 vehicles daily. Operating at capacity, the piggy facility would increase this by only about six percent. No piggyback traffic on residential streets. No piggyback traffic would be allowed north of Hulsey Ya Boulevard, nor on any residential or non-truck designate in Cabbagetown, Reynoldstown, Inman Park, Grant Parl the King Historic District. 1984 AJC pro-"Piggyback" Facility advertisement. CSX's proposal to expand the yard into an intermodal transfer facility was controversial within the neighborhoods. place people or

related expansion (1924 AJC Archives). This gave rise to the names “Hulsey Yard” and “Hulsey Yards” which have since been used interchangeably.

In the mid-1980s, CSX expanded Hulsey Yard, creating a “piggyback” facility that would facilitate transfer of shipping containers (goods) from rail cars onto semi-trailer trucks. This expansion was highly controversial at the time (particularly to Cabbagetown and Reynoldstown residents) but ultimately moved forward with City of Atlanta political support and CSX agreeing to provide financial resources for renovation of neighborhood amenities. Hulsey Yard has continued to operate as an intermodal freight transfer facility since the mid-1980s.

Hulsey Yard historic milestones:

- 1902 – Subsidiary of Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (ACL)
- 1911 – listed on Sanborn as “Atlanta Joint Railroad Company”
- 1927 – listed on map as “Georgia Railroad & Banking Company” (first time “Hulsey Yards” is referenced)
- 1967 – Seaboard Coast Line Railroad (ACL merged with Seaboard Air Line Railroad)
- 1985 – “Piggyback Facility” created
- 1986 – CSX Transportation (SCLR merged with Chessie System)
- 2019 – CSX vacates site

Gone Overnight

In recent years CSX has planned for transition of intermodal freight activities to a larger yard in nearby Fairburn, GA, citing Hulsey Yard’s comparatively small size and increasingly-constrained freight access (mostly via Boulevard). Those considerations combined with unprecedented BeltLine-related growth and development led to CSX ceasing operations on the site in May 2019. It is important to note that although Hulsey Yard as a transfer facility has been relocated, the east-west freight line (which runs along the northern edge of the site under MARTA) will continue to be active and need to operate in perpetuity.

Historic Street Connections

Although the Krog Tunnel remains today as the only neighborhood street connection across the site (Boulevard and Moreland serve as urban arterial streets), historic maps indicate that as far back as 1911 there were at least four neighborhood street connections across Hulsey Yard, including:

- *Powell Street Tunnel*, connecting to and ending at Dekalb Avenue (present in both 1911 and 1927 maps)
- *Krog Street Tunnel*, connecting Estoria Street to Krog Street (not present in 1911, but shows up 1927 map)



This 1927 map Hulsey Yard shows the multiple street connections to the north and south - at Powell Street (“underpass”, to left), Krog (“underpass, middle) and Delta Place (at-grade street, to right). Of these three, Krog is the only connection that remains. (Source: Emory University Archives)

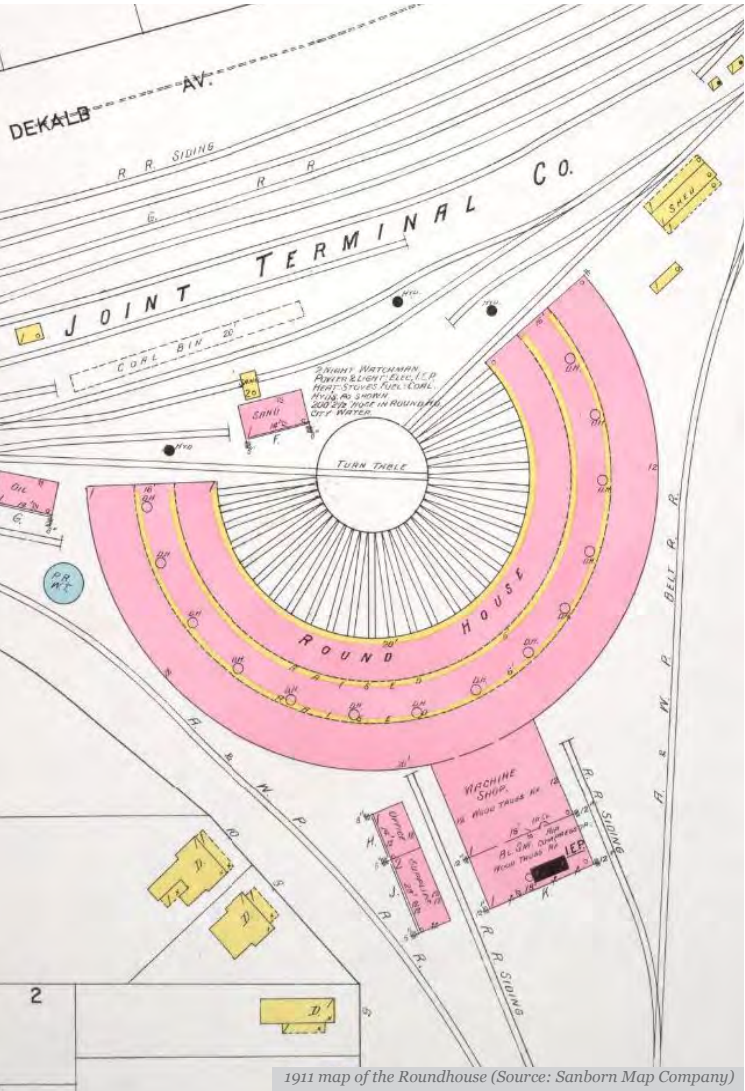
- *Pearl Street*, an at-grade RR crossing connecting to and ending at Dekalb Avenue (present in 1911 map, but not present in 1927 map)
- *Delta Place*, an at-grade RR crossing connecting current Delta Place to current Chester Street

Interestingly, although the Powell Street tunnel has been sealed for at least 60 years, remnants of the tunnel’s southern entrance are still visible just north of the retaining wall near the “Powell jog” on Wylie Street. It is unclear whether portions of the tunnel still exist under the site.

The Roundhouse

Although Hulsey Yard does not currently include any known historic structures (with character-defining features), a variety of historically-significant railroad and industry-related buildings did formerly exist on the site. One building in particular – the railroad roundhouse – has become somewhat legendary over the years and is often the focus of design discussions related to future parks and open space.

The railway roundhouse was a circular-shaped building formerly used for storing railroad locomotives. These types of structures are traditionally adjacent to a railway turntable (turning mechanism for locomotives). Historic maps of Hulsey Yard indicate such a structure existed within the eastern portion of the site as late as 1949. It is believed to have been demolished sometime in the 1950s or 1960s.



1911 map of the Roundhouse (Source: Sanborn Map Company)

RECENT & RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

The Beltline Emerald Necklace Study (2004)

The so-called “Emerald Necklace Study” highlighted five big discontinuity points along the BeltLine loop. (pg 38, Emerald Necklace Study). The two key discontinuity points along the eastern half of the BeltLine were CSX Hulsey Yard and Bill Kennedy Way. As of 2019, plans for the Bill Kennedy Way portion of the BeltLine have progressed substantially, with both a short- and long-term plan identified. In that context, one could say that Hulsey Yard remains as the last big puzzle to solve along the entire eastern half of the beltline. Major points of the Emerald Necklace Study related to Hulsey Yard are as follows.

“Although CSX poses a serious obstacle for the Beltline Transit, the Beltline Trail should not be delayed due to the rail yard. A PATH bike route already runs along Krog Street, which runs under the rail yard, and the Beltline Trail could simply share this portion through the tunnel and east on Wylie Street. When the entire site is redeveloped, as outlined in Chapter 4, this portion of the Beltline will feature a dedicated, off-street path that does not share a road with traffic. Until that point, sharing the current bike route will suffice..

“A series of actions will overcome these problems and create a new transit-oriented, park-centered development in one of the most attractive locations in Atlanta:

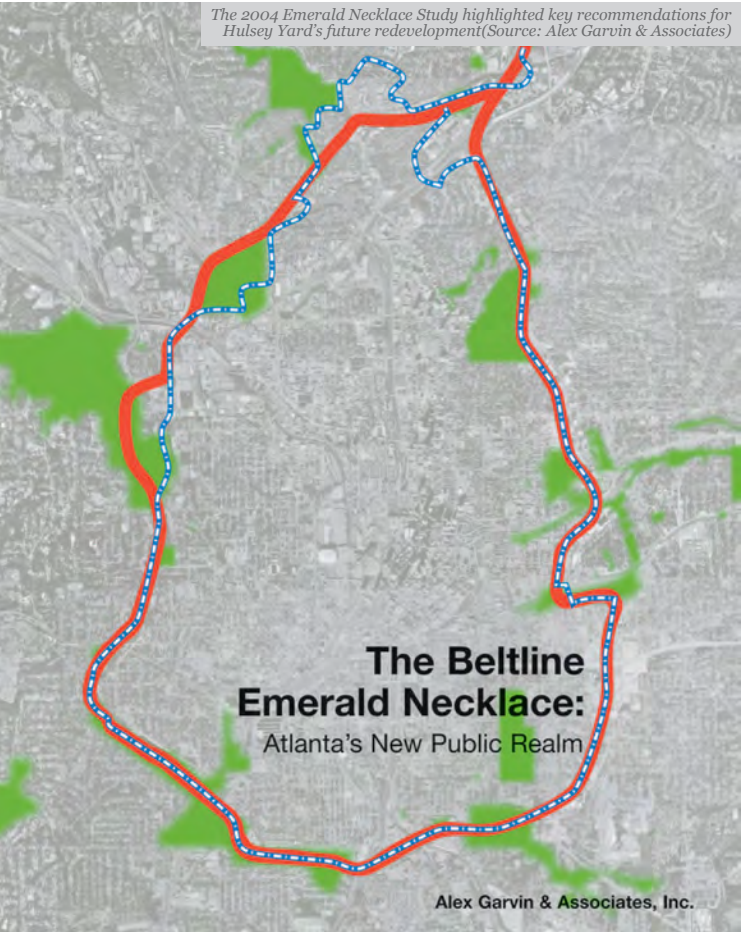
- Relocate the CSX Intermodal Hulsey Yard facility.
- Depress the CSX freight tracks.
- Add a Beltline Transit/MARTA station.
- Create a 40-acre park around the transit station.
- Develop a new community around the park and transit station”

- 2004 Emerald Necklace Study

This 2019 masterplan embraces most of the fundamentals outlined in the initial study from 15 years ago, including:

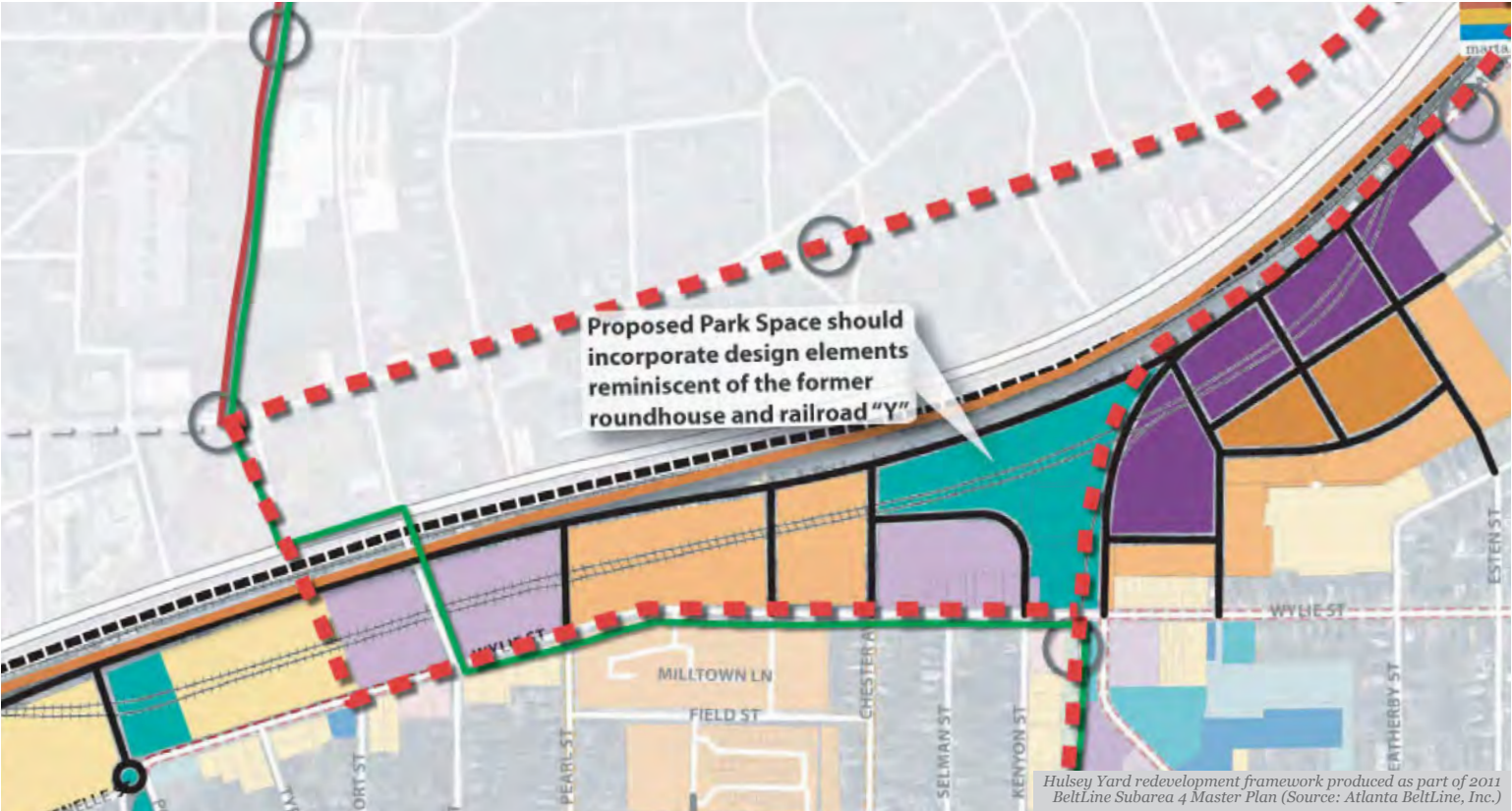
- Relocation of the facility (first action above), which occurred in May 2019.
- The idea of a BeltLine/MARTA transit station is sound, highly supported by the neighborhoods and is a primary component of this overall vision.
- The neighborhood’s preference to create a large, contiguous park within the heart of a new community also echoes the Emerald Necklace recommendations, although the actual acreage of such a park is highly contingent upon public-sector involvement in the redevelopment.

A notable difference between the 2004 plan and this 2019 masterplan is the notion of depressing the CSX freight tracks. The planning team



explored this idea conceptually, but did not believe it was feasible for a number of reasons:

- Most design standards for freight rail specify a maximum running grade of about 2% as well as a minimum height clearance of 22 feet. Assuming 3 additional feet over the rail tunnel for structure and surface material, that means the rail lines would need to transition about 25 feet underground prior to reaching either side of Hulsey Yard. That equates to about ¼ mile of slope before reaching the yard from both the west and the east. Such a tunnel would therefore be almost two miles long, beginning to the east near Moreland Avenue and to the west near Hilliard Street.
- Depressing the CSX freight line might allow for easier connections between Hulsey Yard and Dekalb Avenue in some locations. However, its transition to a lower grade would seem to necessitate closing the existing vehicular tunnel at Boulevard, which does not seem feasible.
- Considering the order of magnitude in terms of cost for creating a two-mile-long freight tunnel, the team felt that – assuming new at-grade connections across the CSX line can be achieved - such costs would be better spent on tunneling for transit, site connections/improvements and construction of public amenities.



Atlanta BeltLine Master Plan: Subarea 4 (2011)

The Subarea (SU) 4 Masterplan observed two major physical barriers to this segment of the BeltLine:

- 1. Interstate 20
- 2. the CSX Hulsey Yard Intermodal Transfer Facility

The plan noted that both of these barriers “present challenges for connectivity and require special attention around their edges from land use, mobility, air quality and noise pollution perspectives.”

At the time of the SU4 master planning process, which occurred throughout 2010 and 2011, Hulsey Yard was still a very active freight transfer facility with little signs of changing in the near-term. SU4 Masterplan recommendations focused attention on the BeltLine/Memorial Drive node, the then-undeveloped land south of I-20 west of Bill Kennedy Way (now Kroger Marketplace) as well as portions of the BeltLine corridor fronting Wylie Street and running N-S through Reynoldstown.

The SU4 plan did include a Hulsey Yard Development Option (see graphic above). As part of the 2019 planning effort, the team loosely referenced this diagram when developing the various Framework Plan options. Commonalities include:

- Large contiguous park space incorporating design elements reminiscent of the former Roundhouse and Railroad “Y”

- Similar blocks sizes and site layout, particularly within the eastern portion of the site
- Increased density in closer proximity to the current MARTA Rail Station
- Similar transitional height planes shown between Hulsey Yard and adjacent lower-density neighborhoods

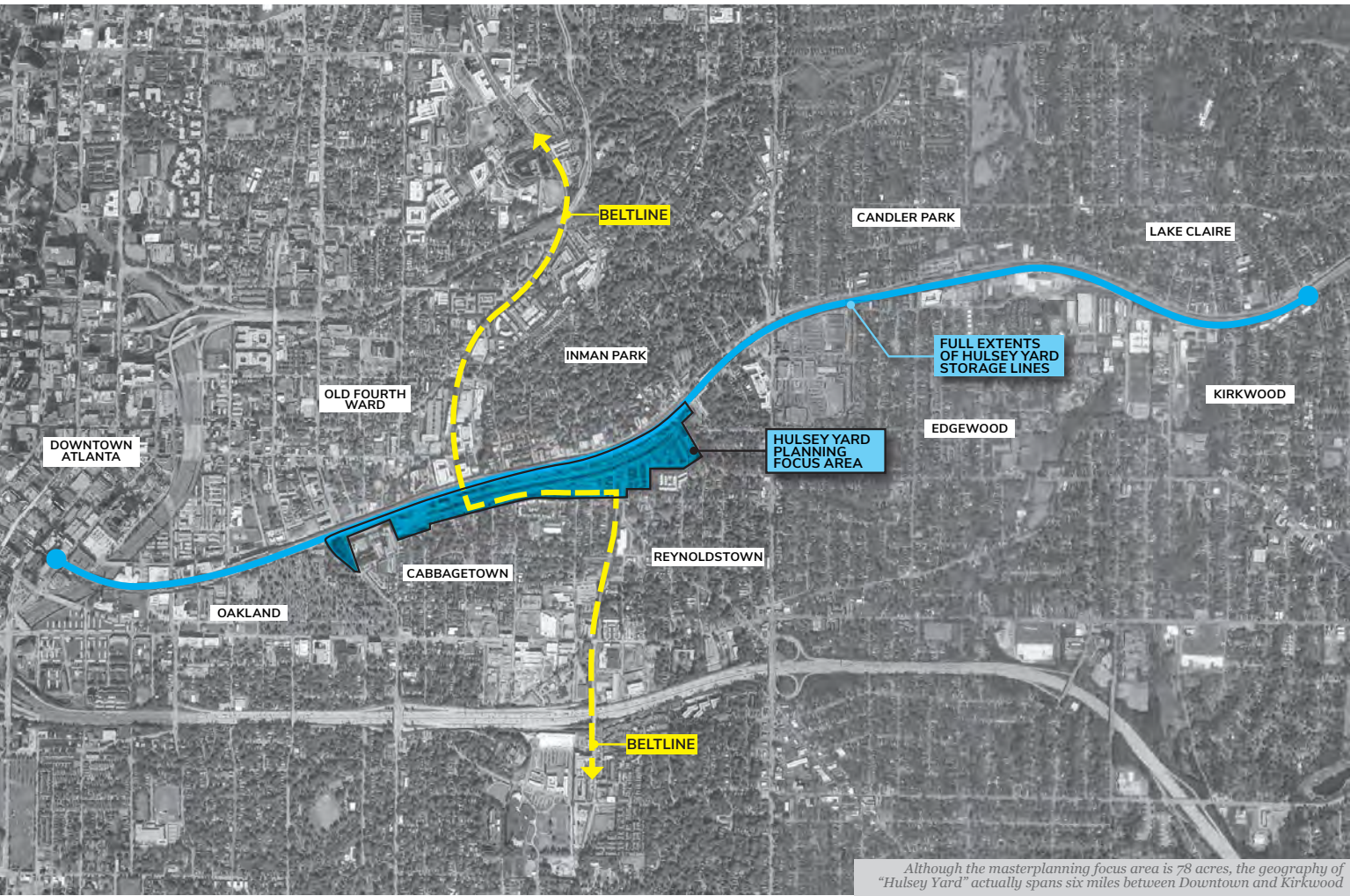
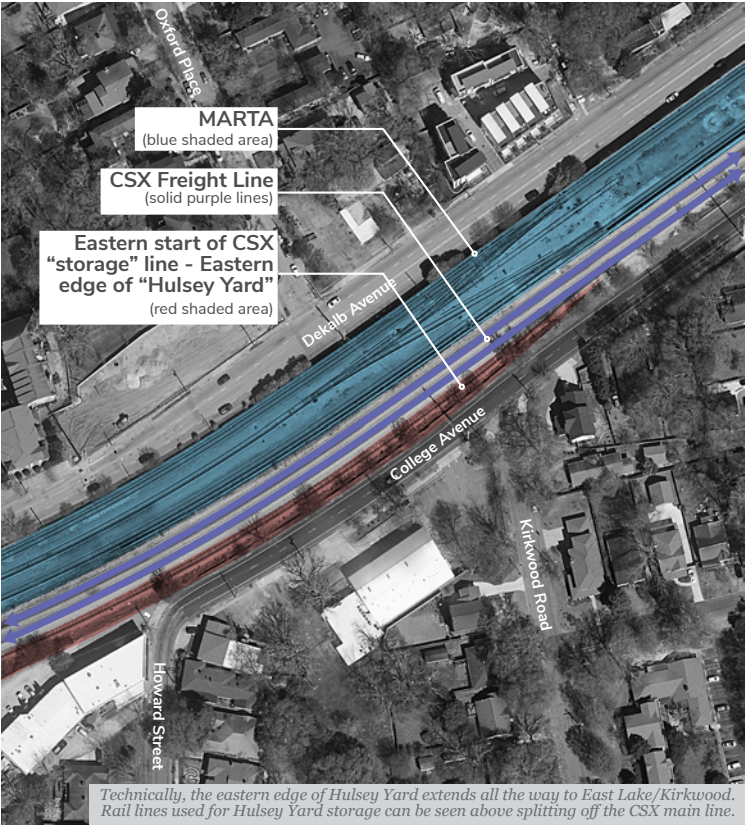
Key differences between the 2011 SU4 Hulsey Yard Development Option and the 2019 Masterplan include:

- Increased priority of creating new street connections between the site and Dekalb Avenue via new at-grade CSX rail crossings
- Slightly higher densities shown across the site, primarily due to rising land values and an increased citywide focus on affordable housing in recent years
- Updated BeltLine transit alignment (per subsequent ABI transit engineering studies)

PLANNING FOCUS AREA

The 78-acre masterplanning focus area is roughly bounded by the CSX rail corridor to the north (nicknamed “The Georgia Road” by railroad employees), Fulton Cotton Mill Lofts/The Stacks and Wylie Street to the south, the Inman Park-Reynoldstown MARTA station to the east and Oakland Cemetery to the west. While the bulk of master planning activities focused on this larger/wider area, it is important to note that the area in which former CSX intermodal activities occurred was actually much larger.

Historically, CSX freight operators have often considered the geography of “Hulsey Yard” as spanning roughly six linear miles between Jesse Hill Drive (within Downtown to the west) and Rocky Ford Road (within Kirkwood/East Lake to the east). This is due to the fact that much of the freight corridor for this six miles includes various train car storage and staging areas often affiliated with the larger intermodal transfer yard. For the purposes of the planning effort, however, the 78 acres was considered the key development opportunity given that the majority of the rest of the six miles is narrow and therefore unlikely to be redeveloped (aside from possibly an additional trail or street connection as later described in the “Establish a Public Street Grid” section).





Planning Process

NEIGHBORHOOD MOBILIZATION

Despite decades of planning efforts related to the massive site, it seemed until recently that Hulsey Yard might remain a rail yard forever. After all, most of the site has been owned and operated by various railroad companies for over 150 years. In recent years, however, rumors began circulating that CSX was seriously considering moving their shipping transfer activities from Hulsey Yard to a much larger and more freight-accessible site in Fairburn, Georgia. At that time several affected neighborhoods were in the middle of what could be considered more *reactive* planning discussions for new development along both the BeltLine and Memorial Drive corridors. Given the sheer size and impact of a potentially-redeveloped Hulsey Yard, community leaders saw an opportunity for a more *proactive* planning effort for this site. As a result, the Hulsey Yard Study Committee (HYSC) was created in 2018 by the four most impacted neighborhoods – Cabbagetown, Inman Park, Reynoldstown and Old Fourth Ward. The committee’s first major task was to begin a planning process for the site that would serve as a working vision, attract thoughtful partnerships and inspire uplifting cooperation between neighbors.

The committee was comprised of officers from each neighborhood association as well as representatives of NPUs N & M, the Historic Oakland Foundation, Fulton Cotton Mill Lofts and The Stacks. Each neighborhood contributed funding that would go towards hiring a planning firm to help develop a community-driven master plan focused on consensus building, neighborhood collaboration and meaningful engagement of current and potential stakeholders. In early 2019, the HYSC sent out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to various firms and eventually selected Lord Aeck Sargent (LAS) – an Atlanta-based Architecture and Planning firm - through a competitive bid and interview process. LAS was chosen based on their varied portfolio of developer-led projects as well as their deep experience with community-based planning on comparable urban sites.

PROCESS & SCHEDULE

Streamlined Planning Process

The LAS team tailored the planning scope based on funding available and created an aggressive schedule to capitalize on momentum related to the future of the site. The bulk of master planning activities occurred between March and September 2019 and unfolded through four phases:

Phase 1: Site Analysis & Project Objectives – The planning team streamlined this phase into a matter of weeks by utilizing a wealth of

inventory and analysis data created through previous BeltLine-related planning efforts. The team was therefore able to simply reference (rather than create) this background data and jump more quickly into community engagement.

Phase 2: Community Collaboration – The heart of this phase involved a four-day (all day long) planning “Pop-Up” Studio and online survey with over 800 attendees. Core principles of the plan began to develop as a result of active participation. Meetings with key public agencies (Atlanta BeltLine, MARTA, City of Atlanta) and non-profit organizations (Park Pride, BeltLine Rail Now) followed in order to ensure that potential partners were on the same page.

Phase 3: Concept Advancement – Based on public consensus points and partner feedback, Framework Plan options were created illustrating how community character, density, new connections and open space(s) could be arranged across the site in various ways. The planning team then facilitated a second Public workshop and online survey where over 500 neighbors participated. A series of HYSC discussions helped boil-down consensus highlights into the key components of the plan.

Phase 4: Master Plan Summary Booklet – Master Plan fundamentals, framework plans and recommendations were summarized into this concise guidebook for use by neighborhood partners, prospective development teams, public sector agencies, advocacy/non-profit groups and CSX in planning the future of the site.



A physical model of Hulsey Yard served as a valuable planning tool, helping neighbors understand the complexities of the current site such as topography, walls and tunnels.



Neighbors discuss Framework Plan options with the Planning Team during the Open House in July 2019

Neighborhood Master Planning Process Goals

For over a century Hulsey Yard has represented a neighborhood divide – both physically and socioeconomically. In the spirit of “repairing” this divide, the planning effort was as much about creating a physical plan as it was about the process of collaboration between neighbors - particularly across neighborhoods. At the start of the process, the Hulsey Yard Study Committee developed a series of overarching goals that would drive the planning process. In summary, the master planning process should:

- Involve as many people as possible, address neighborhood questions, alleviate concerns, educate stakeholders on developmental “trade offs”, spark conversations across neighborhoods, promote YIMBY-ism (yes, in my backyard) and result in a cohesive vision for the site.
- Result in a plan that is generally market-realistic, grounded in lessons-learned from similar case studies and represent “a plan that CSX can actually use.”
- Incorporate a variety of land uses, avoid focusing solely on conventional development types (wood frame, podium construction, etc.) and promote “smart density.”
- Analyze current zoning regulations in adjacent neighborhoods and make recommendations for strengthening or adapting those regulations.

- Embrace BeltLine transit, connect with MARTA rail, explore connectivity alternatives to the Krog Tunnel and integrate a variety of modal options.
- Incorporate sizeable public open spaces that celebrate the history of the site.

Planning Lessons Learned

There were many positive lessons-learned from this planning effort that could inform future planning efforts in Atlanta and elsewhere. A key advantage here was that the neighborhoods were nimble enough to quickly mobilize as rumors of the property’s vacancy began to circulate. In other words, they didn’t have to apply for grant funding or go through a lengthy procurement process. Instead, a master planning process was tailored based on the resources the collective neighborhoods generally already had on-hand. This was ideal timing-wise as the planning process was well underway by the time CSX vacated the site. Curiosity over the yard’s emptiness drew increased attendance to workshops. Without an impending land sale or developer yet at the table, workshops were structured so that meaningful and productive dialog between neighbors could take place.

“I want the entire thing to be a park” was a common sentiment throughout the workshops and neighborhood conversations. While the entirety of Hulsey Yard would certainly allow for an amazing park, most real estate professionals were anecdotally hypothesizing a land value of between \$2-5 million per acre. Early discussions with public

agencies and partners seemed to indicate that a public-sector land purchase was highly unlikely. The planning team and study committee’s methodology was therefore to use our collective experience working for both developers and the public sector to anticipate private-sector-led development as the most likely outcome for Hulsey Yard. Our mission was therefore to engage in productive dialog with as many stakeholders as possible to help them create the *best version* of that likely outcome.

The planners assumed that the two big questions a development team would ask would be:

- How much density for this site is acceptable by the neighborhoods?
- What additional transportation connections are possible/acceptable?



Participants in the Pop-Up Studio used to-scale legos and blocks to plan for future density and better-understand how height transitions work with adjacent low-density neighborhoods. (Example photo, not an actual development proposal)



Approximately 500 participants attended the Pop-Up Studio, held May 8-11, 2019.

The bulk of workshop activities were therefore structured around digging deeply into these two questions. Planning Stations allowed ballots to be cast on issues related to community character typologies and potential street connections. Rather than asking broad questions such as “What do you think?”, very specific questions were to be answered using multiple-choice ballots. Results of ballots were tallied, yielding very quantitative consensus results, which were then directly translated into framework plans and recommendations.

NEIGHBORHOOD WORKSHOPS

The main forums of neighborhood input and collaboration were two public workshops held at Lang-Carson Community Center in Reynoldstown. Each workshop was followed by an online version of the activities.

Pop-Up Studio (May 8-11, 2019)

“Build it for people to live in and not for people to visit. People will visit anyway.”

(workshop comment)

The concept of the pop-up studio was to “bring the design studio to the neighborhood” and integrate neighbors into the design process from the very beginning. Roughly 500 people attended this first four-day public workshop, which was organized around a series of voting/prioritization exercises related to Connectivity, Community Character and Emerging Themes. Existing Conditions Maps, Historic Maps and various Analysis Diagrams for the 78-acre focus area were displayed around the room to help participants better-understand the history and context of the site. Because topography and physical constraints are a key component of site planning, a to-scale physical model of the site (which has found a permanent home for the public to view at The Patch Works Museum in Cabbagetown) was built for stakeholders to engage with. Planning team members were on-hand to assist participants through the exercises, answer questions, engage in

dialog with neighbors, and collect ideas for the future of the site. Over 300 participants engaged in a follow-up online version of the same activities.

Public Open House (July 13, 2019)

Over 250 people attended this Saturday morning “open house” event. Planning activities were developed as a way to dig deeper into themes and ideas initially discussed at the Pop-Up Studio. The room was organized around three planning stations where participants cast ballots related to Redevelopment Framework Plans (Station 1), Open Spaces & Amenities (Station 2), and Street Types (Station 3). Other workshop materials included previously-shown site analysis maps, Pop-Up Studio highlights boards, the physical site model, Live/Work dot exercises, and general “What are we missing?” comment boards. Planning team members were on-hand to assist participants through the exercises, answer questions, engage in dialog with neighbors, and collect ideas for the future of the site.

Following the July 13 Open House, the planning team created an online version of the same planning activities, which was active the week of July 22. 378 people completed the online planning activities.

Summaries of the individual workshops can be found in the Appendix.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSENSUS HIGHLIGHTS

All told the Pop-Up Studio, Public Open House and the two on-line surveys resulted in almost 1500 community participants. While all individual written comments, drawings and input were recorded, documented and reviewed, the highlights summarized as follows represent the most common themes, concerns and ideas documented through various public engagement activities.

Common Stakeholder Themes

- Incorporation of **public park(s)/greenspace** was by far the most popular desired program
- Clear consensus to **prioritize ped/bike over vehicular-oriented** connections. “Do not design based on cars” was a very popular sentiment.
- Clear consensus to **explore “other ways to cross besides Krog”**
- Clear consensus for **“appropriate density”** along the northern portion of the site as long as transitional height planes to adjacent neighborhoods were respected.
- Clear consensus of **support for BeltLine transit** and its direct **connection to MARTA.**
- Clear consensus to **maximize Affordable Housing.**
- Ability for Hulsey to **accommodate Senior Housing** needs = big concern for many participants
- The idea of **celebrating site history through design of the site** drew widespread interest and support. The notion of the former roundhouse being abstracted as part of site/open space design was discussed extensively.
- Be aggressive with parking ratios; **embrace “parking maximums.”**
- Desire for **“top notch architecture”** was mentioned many times, coupled with a desire to not see conventional/homogenous development.
- **“No big box”** was written or mentioned numerous times.

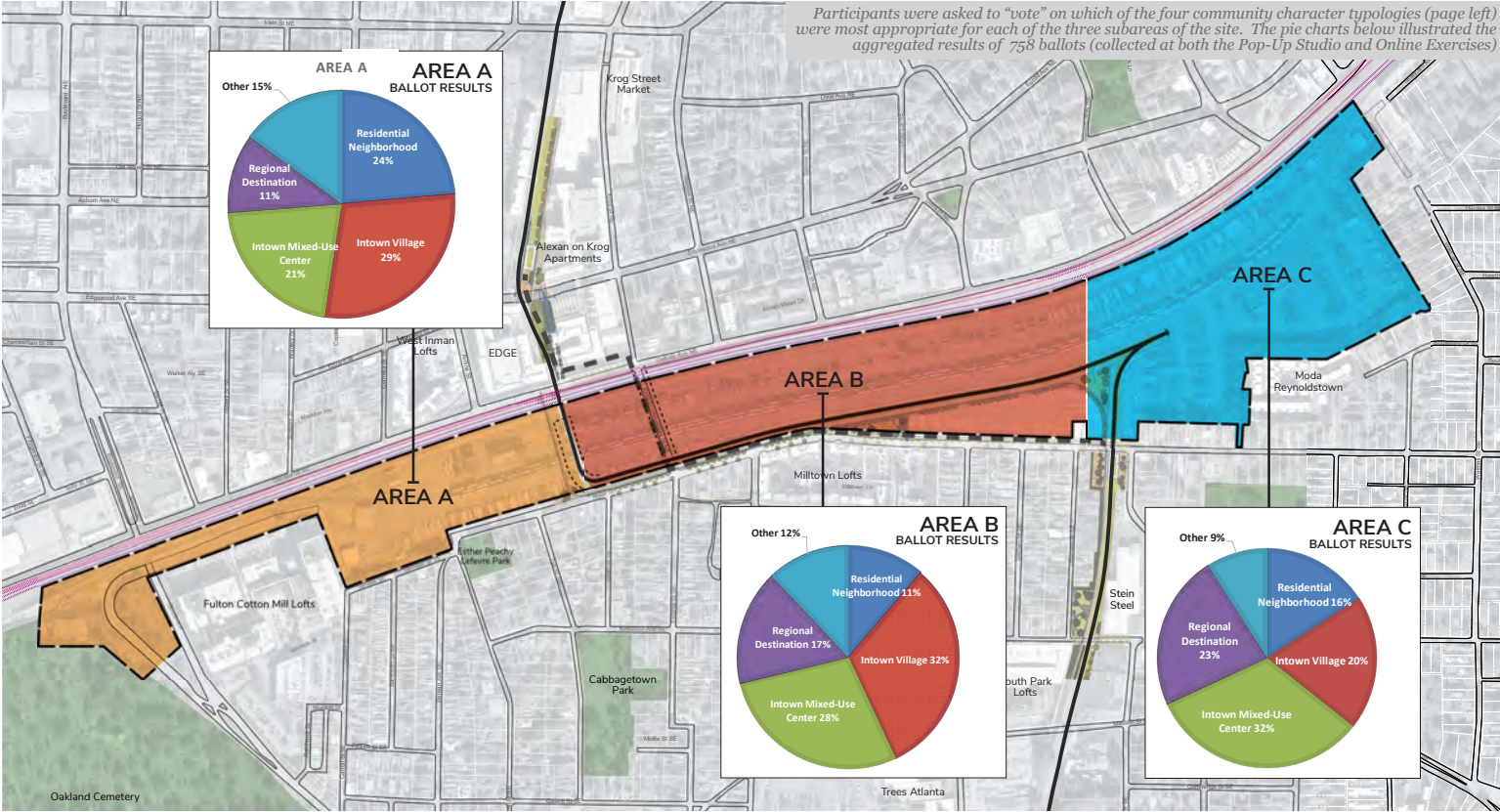
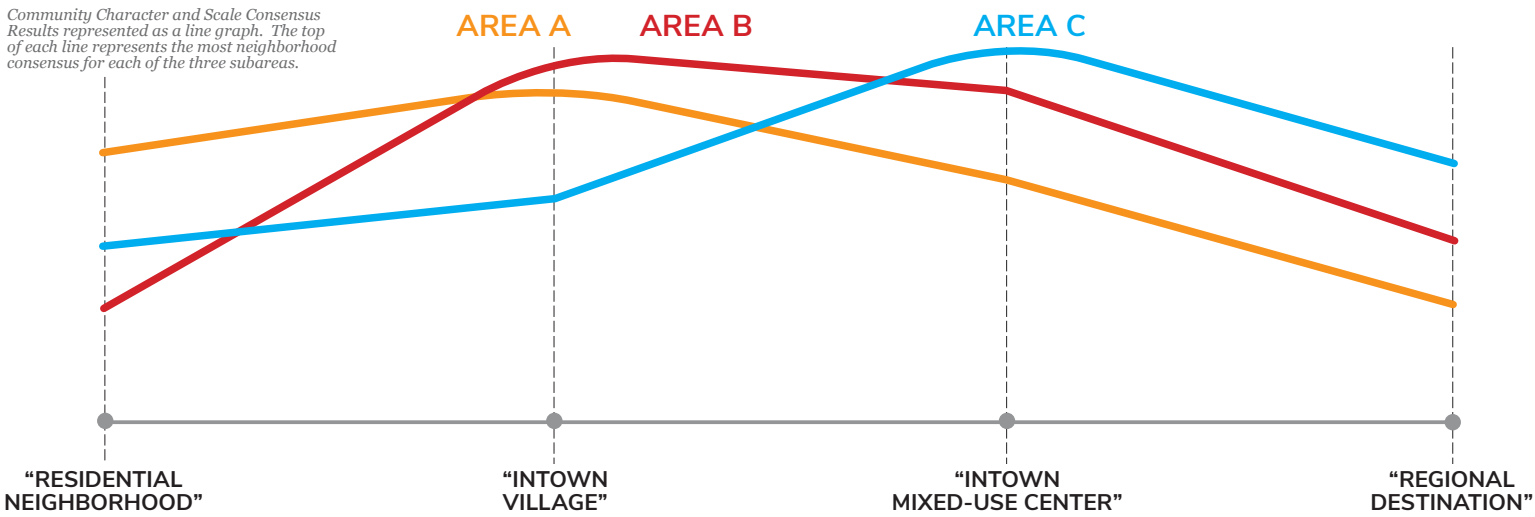


Over 250 participants attended the Open House on July 13, 2019.

Community Character & Scale Consensus Results

In order to gather feedback on developmental character, scale and density, the planning team defined four “typologies” of community character which included Residential Neighborhood, Intown Village, Intown Mixed-Use Center and Regional Destination (see graphics page left). Attributes and example photos of each typology were displayed along with a map outlining three geographic areas within the site. The definitions of the typologies were intended to demonstrate real-world relationships and linkages among programmatic elements in a way that generally match real estate fundamentals. For example, higher density development will generally allow for more open spaces and retail goods and services. In this way, participants were asked to make

Community Character and Scale Consensus Results represented as a line graph. The top of each line represents the most neighborhood consensus for each of the three subareas.



realistic choices. Participants placed check marks on ballots denoting which type of community character they felt was most appropriate within each area. Based on 758 ballots (from the Pop-Up Studio and the follow up on-line survey), the following typologies garnered the most consensus for the three areas:

- Area A - general consensus was Intown Village
- Area B – general consensus fell between Intown Village and Intown Mixed-Use Center
- Area C – general consensus was squarely on Intown Mixed-Use Center with some support for Regional Destination

Community Character & Scale Typologies

“Residential Neighborhood”

Community Character Type Attributes:

Attribute	Typology
SCALE:	3 to 4 stories
JOB CREATION:	None
SHOPPING / ENTERTAINMENT:	None
HOUSING:	Lowest number of housing units
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY:	Minimum opportunity
OPEN SPACE:	Limited, public funding needed

“Intown Village”

Community Character Type Attributes:

Attribute	Typology
SCALE:	4 to 6 stories
JOB CREATION:	Limited, small creative office space
SHOPPING / ENTERTAINMENT:	Limited, local goods & services
HOUSING:	Moderate number of housing units
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY:	Moderate opportunity
OPEN SPACE:	Small pocket parks & plazas

“Intown Mixed-Use Center”

Community Character Type Attributes:

Attribute	Typology
SCALE:	Mix of heights up to 8-10 stories
JOB CREATION:	Loft office space
SHOPPING / ENTERTAINMENT:	Restaurants and shopping
HOUSING:	Highest number of housing units
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY:	Highest opportunity
OPEN SPACE:	Larger parks & plazas

“Regional Destination”

Community Character Type Attributes:

Attribute	Typology
SCALE:	Mix of heights up to 12-16 stories
JOB CREATION:	Maximum opportunity for office space
SHOPPING / ENTERTAINMENT:	Maximum opportunity
HOUSING:	Moderate number of housing units
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY:	Moderate opportunity
OPEN SPACE:	Neighborhood parks, public plazas, signature large community open space

Note: Community Character descriptions are highly conceptual and simplified. They are intended to approximate trade-offs affiliated with varying types of development. Images are intended to illustrate scale not architectural style.



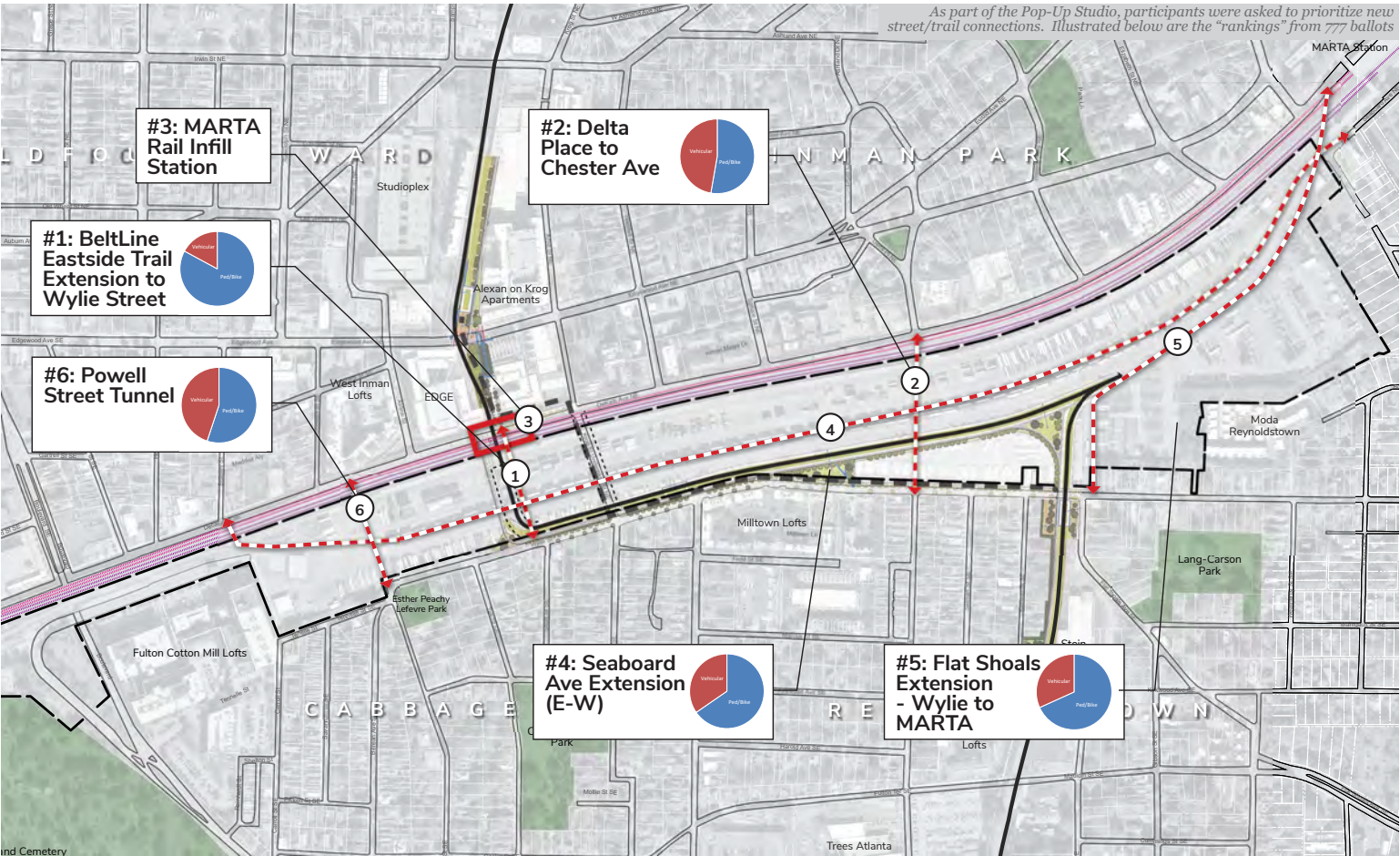
Public workshops were organized into a series of “Planning Stations”, where participants answered specific questions using ballots. Plan concepts were directly based on the consensual ballot results.

Connectivity & Mobility

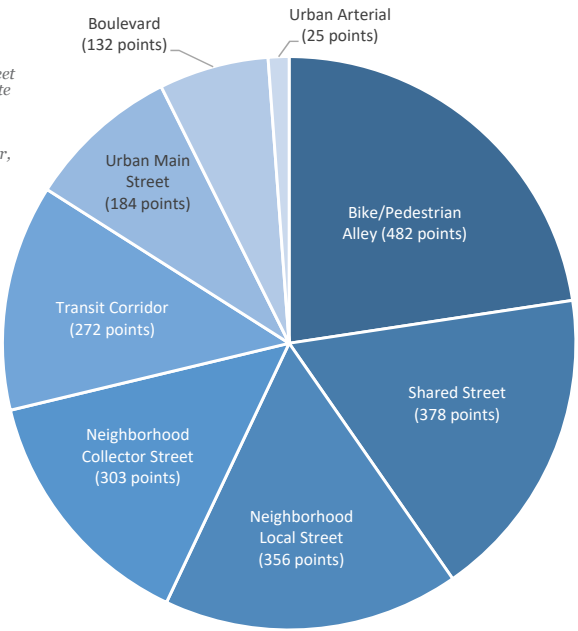
As part of Pop-Up Studio exercises, the planning team created a map illustrating six potential transit, street, trail and pedestrian connections (identified based on committee input). Participants were asked to rank each connection in terms of priority. The following priorities were based on 777 ballots.

- 1. BeltLine Eastside Trail Extension to Wylie Street
- 2. Delta Place to Chester Avenue
- 3. MARTA Rail Infill Station
- 4. Seaboard Avenue East-West Extension
- 5. Flat Shoals Extension – Wylie to MARTA
- 6. Powell Street Tunnel

“Do not design based on cars.”
(workshop comment)



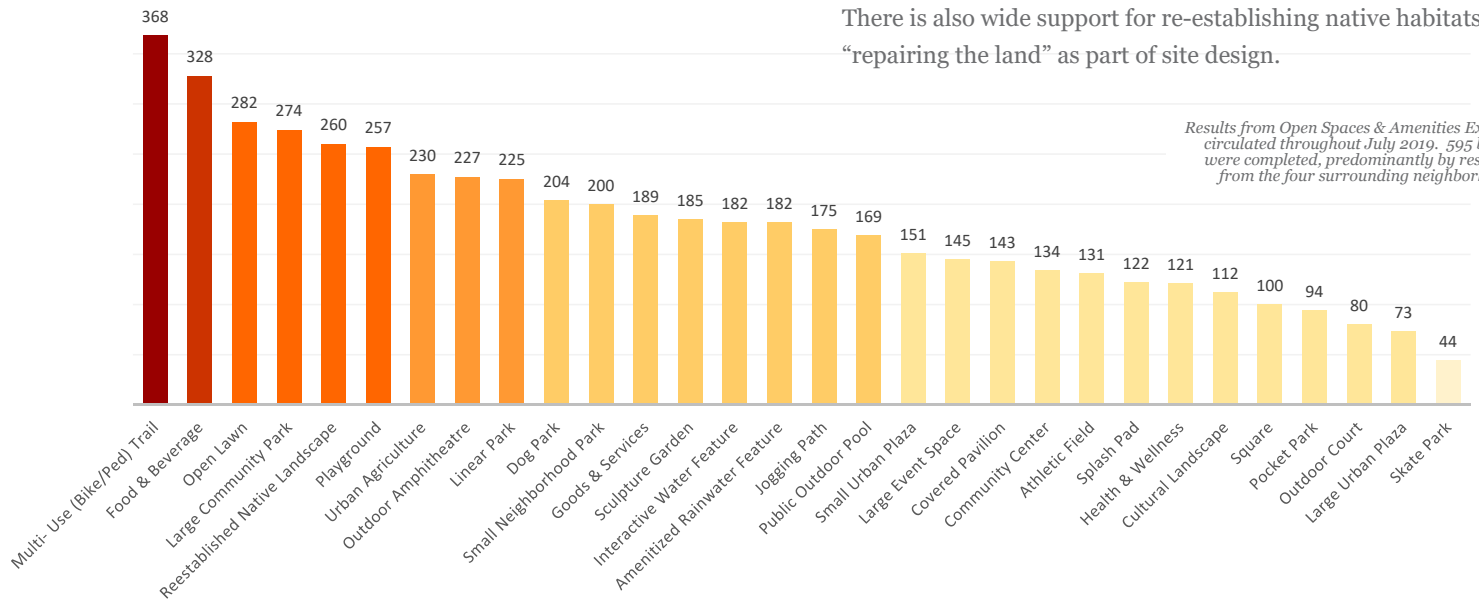
Results from planning exercises related to Street Types “most appropriate for the future of Hulsey Yard.” Based on 589 ballots, the community preference is for smaller, more multimodal, neighborhood-scaled streets.



Street Types

As a part of Public Open House exercises, participants used diagrams and photos representing eight (8) different types of streets, with respondents asked to pick the four (4) street types they felt were the “most appropriate” for the future of Hulsey Yard. Each selection was counted as one point. A few key take-aways include:

- *Bike/Pedestrian Alley* was the most preferred with 482 points. This street type was selected on 82% of all ballots, reinforcing the ongoing theme of prioritizing bike/ped mobility over vehicular mobility.
- *Shared Street, Neighborhood Local Street and Neighborhood Collector Street* also ranked high, with many respondents noting a desire to keep streets neighborhood-scaled.
- On the other hand, *Urban Arterial* only received 25 total points, appearing on less than 4% of all ballots. This reiterates the widespread desire to calm traffic, prioritize safety and include a variety of modal options when designing new streets for the site.



Results from Open Spaces & Amenities Exercise circulated throughout July 2019. 595 ballots were completed, predominantly by residents from the four surrounding neighborhoods.



Open Spaces & Amenities

Using roughly thirty images of various open space and amenity types displayed at the open house, participants were asked to pick the top ten most appropriate for the site. Based on 595 ballots from the Public Open House (with each image selection assigned one point), key highlights were:

- *Multi-Use (Bike/Ped) Trail* was by far the most preferred with 368 points (40 points above any other selection!). This feedback reinforces the prioritization of bike/ped mobility over vehicular mobility - a common theme throughout the planning process.
- *Food & Beverage* was the second-most preferred with 328 points. This is also a common theme related to mobility in that many participants have expressed desire for more proximate, neighborhood-oriented food options.
- *Open Lawn, Large Community Park, Re-established Native Landscape and Playground* also ranked extremely high. These reinforce a clear preference for a larger, more contiguous open space(s) over a smaller, more dispersed system of open spaces. There is also wide support for re-establishing native habitats and “repairing the land” as part of site design.

Framework Plans

What is a Framework Plan?

Following the Pop-Up studio, the planning team translated neighborhood consensus points into a series of three Redevelopment Framework Plans. These plans - which some stakeholders called “bubble diagrams” - were created as direct reflections of the poll results on Community Character, Land Use, Density and Connectivity. The intent of the plans was to illustrate potential street grid, block sizes, transit alignment and scale of development broadly without showing building footprints or too much detail. Graphically, the plans focused dialog on the *big urban design moves* rather than detailed building locations, architecture or land uses.

Each of the three Framework Plan concepts displayed at the July 13th Open House showed roughly the same amounts of density, acreages of open space, street connections to Dekalb Avenue, inclusion of BeltLine transit and a potential infill MARTA station. What was different about each plan was how the different elements were arranged across the site. Open House Participants were asked their preferences related to street/block layout, distribution of open space and how each plan relates to the neighborhood contextually along the site’s periphery.

Roundhouse Park

Key elements of “Roundhouse Park” include a sizeable public park, the extension of Seaboard Avenue as the plan’s main east-west street and more density adjacent to the existing MARTA station. BeltLine transit routing reflects the most recent study by ABI plus the addition of the MARTA spur line. Based on Open House and Online results, Roundhouse Park as a concept was supported by roughly 75% of participants with most comments relating to the preference for a larger neighborhood-oriented open space. The idea of including the railroad roundhouse as part of the site design seemed to also resonate with many participants.

“I love that it honors the legacy of the railyard, which is central to Atlanta’s history, heritage and identity.”
(workshop comment)

Hulsey Squares

Loosely inspired by James Oglethorpe’s plan for Savannah, “Hulsey Squares” spreads a series of medium-sized park blocks across the site. Development is arranged into smaller blocks less focused along the Seaboard Avenue spine. BeltLine transit in this case runs mostly parallel to Wylie Street. This concept garnered roughly 50% support from open house and online participants with comments relating to a preference for smaller block sizes. On the other hand, over 35% of respondents were unsupportive of Hulsey Squares, (2-3 times more



Cutouts of each Framework Plan concept were made that could be swapped-out in the physical model. The Framework Plan concepts were a primary topic during the Open House on July 13, 2019.

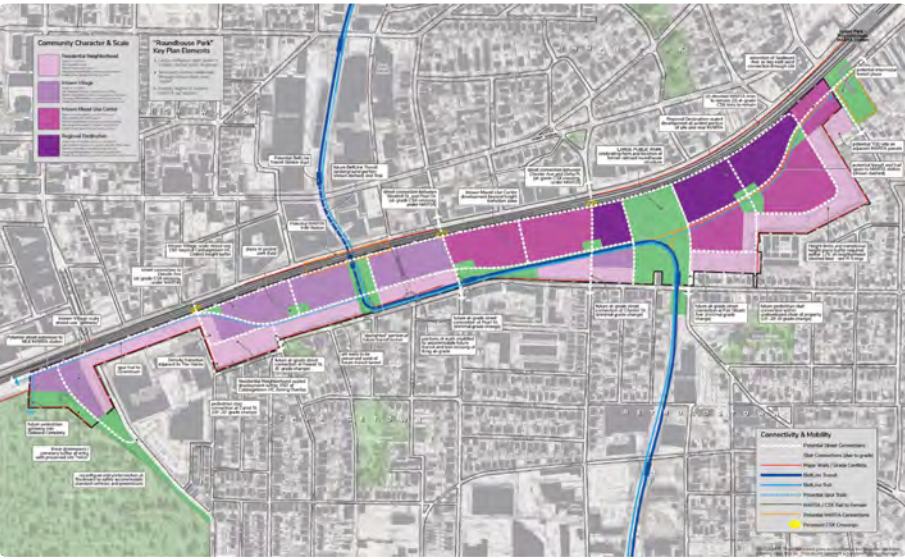
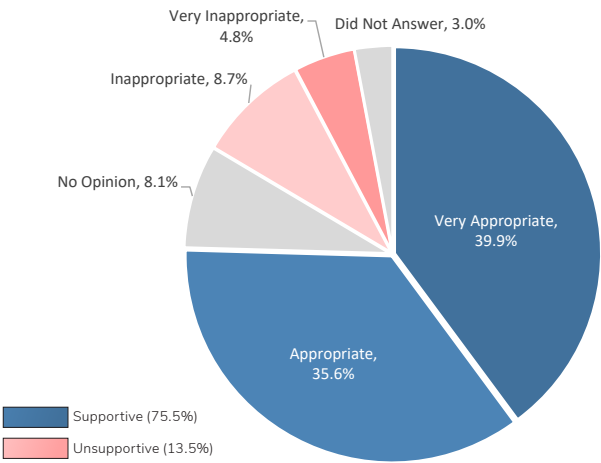
unsupportive than other two concepts), with some participants observing that smaller parks had limited utility as truly public spaces.

Green Ribbon

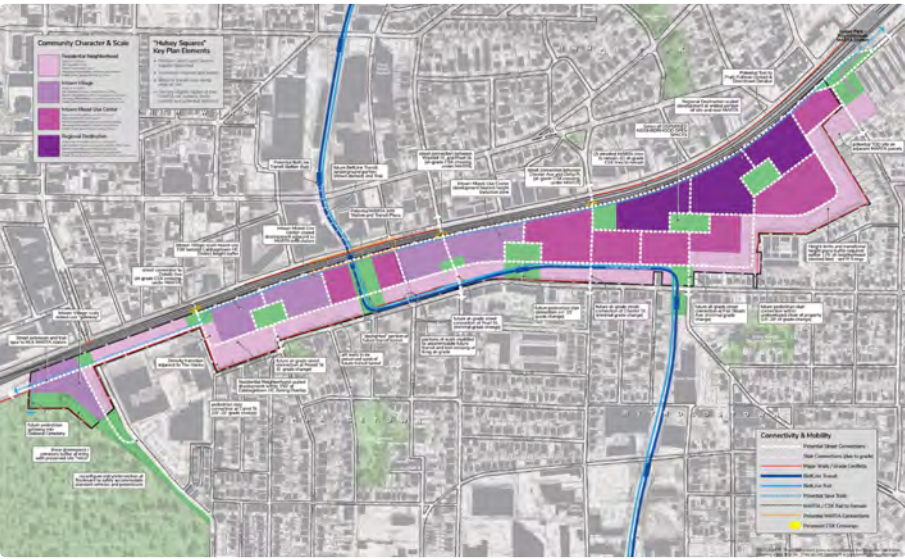
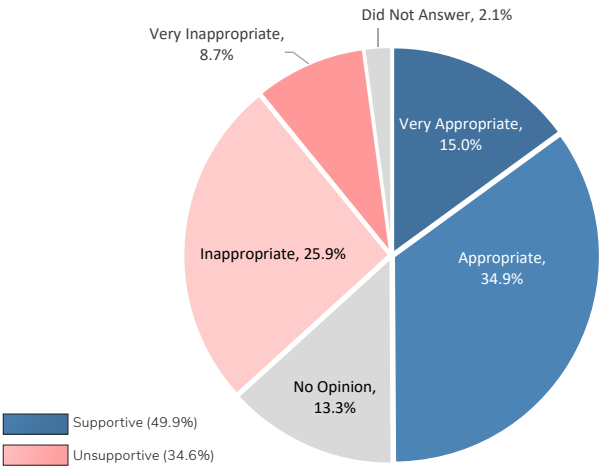
The main feature of Green Ribbon is a linear open space running through the site. New development would “face” this linear greenspace, which would include transit, trail and park uses within it. In this scenario, BeltLine transit routing is slightly reconfigured to run more through the “center” of the site. Based on Open House and Online results, Green Ribbon as a concept was supported by roughly 69% of participants, with many comments (like Roundhouse Park) relating to the preference for a more contiguous open space over a series of more dispersed open spaces. Many participants observed that this concept created more opportunity to emphasize the BeltLine and reinforce a variety of modal options. Others noted that they liked how this concept created more equitable open space across the site while remaining contiguous.

“I like the concept of a linear park that means all residents have greenspace right outside their door. Knowing the health benefits of a daily interaction with nature and greenspace, this design ensures that everyone has equal access to that.”
(workshop comment)

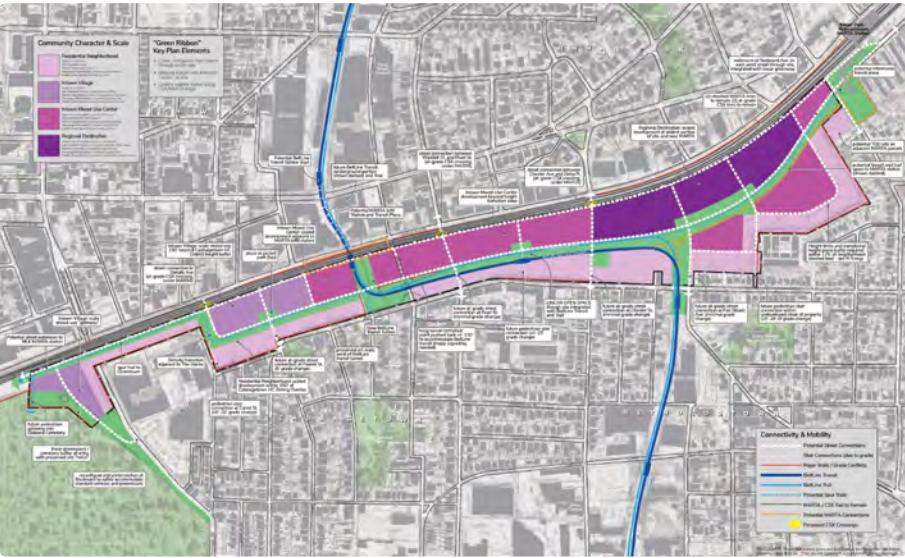
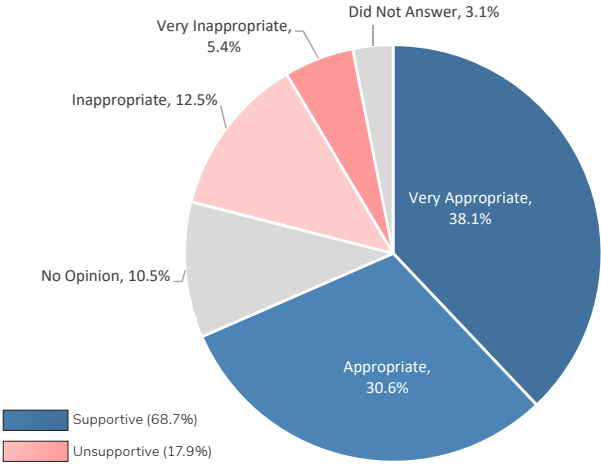
“Roundhouse Park”



“Hulsey Squares”

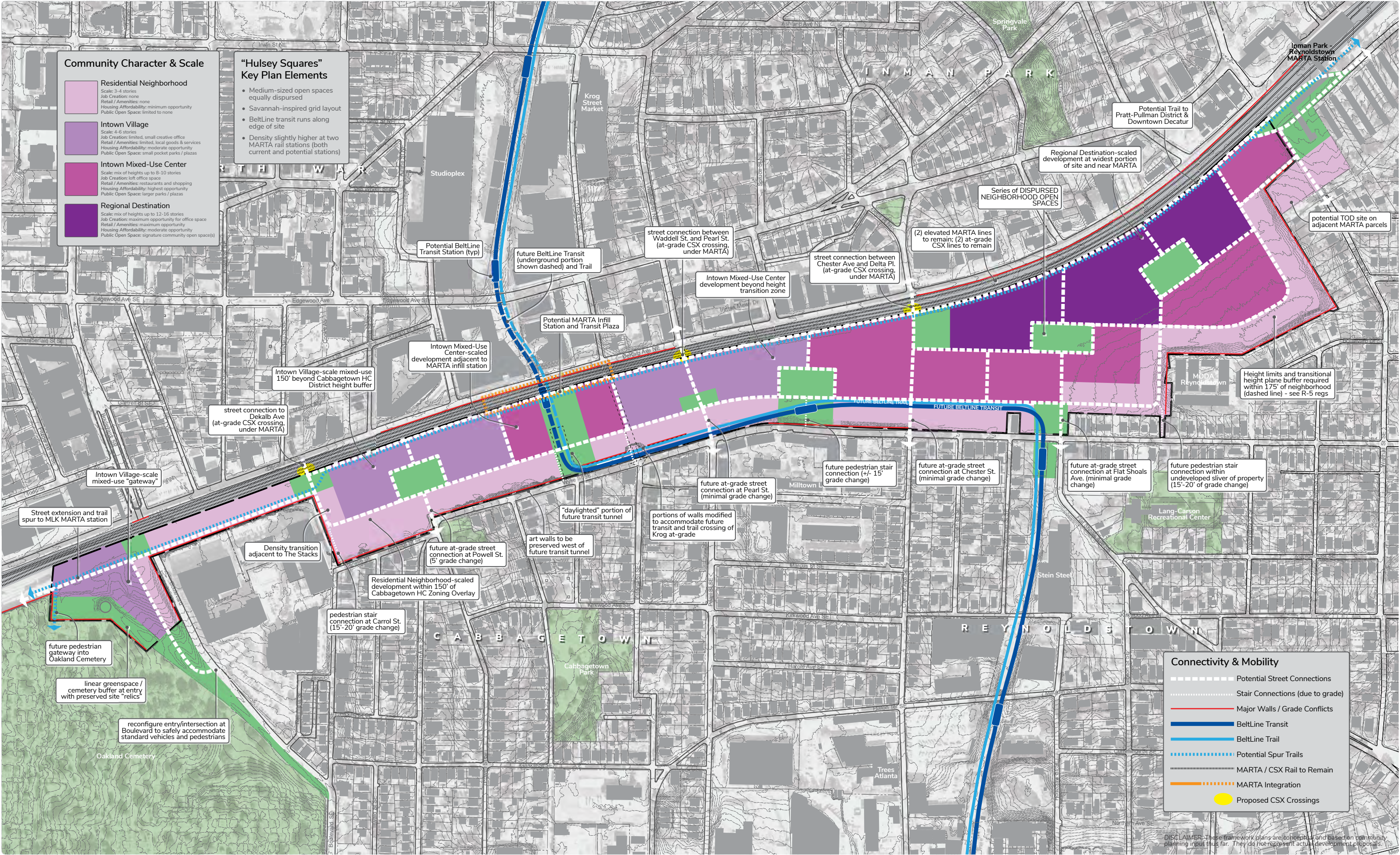


“Green Ribbon”



Public Open House and Online Exercise participants were asked to rank the appropriateness of each Framework Plan option. Above are the consensus results from over 600 ballots.





Community Character & Scale

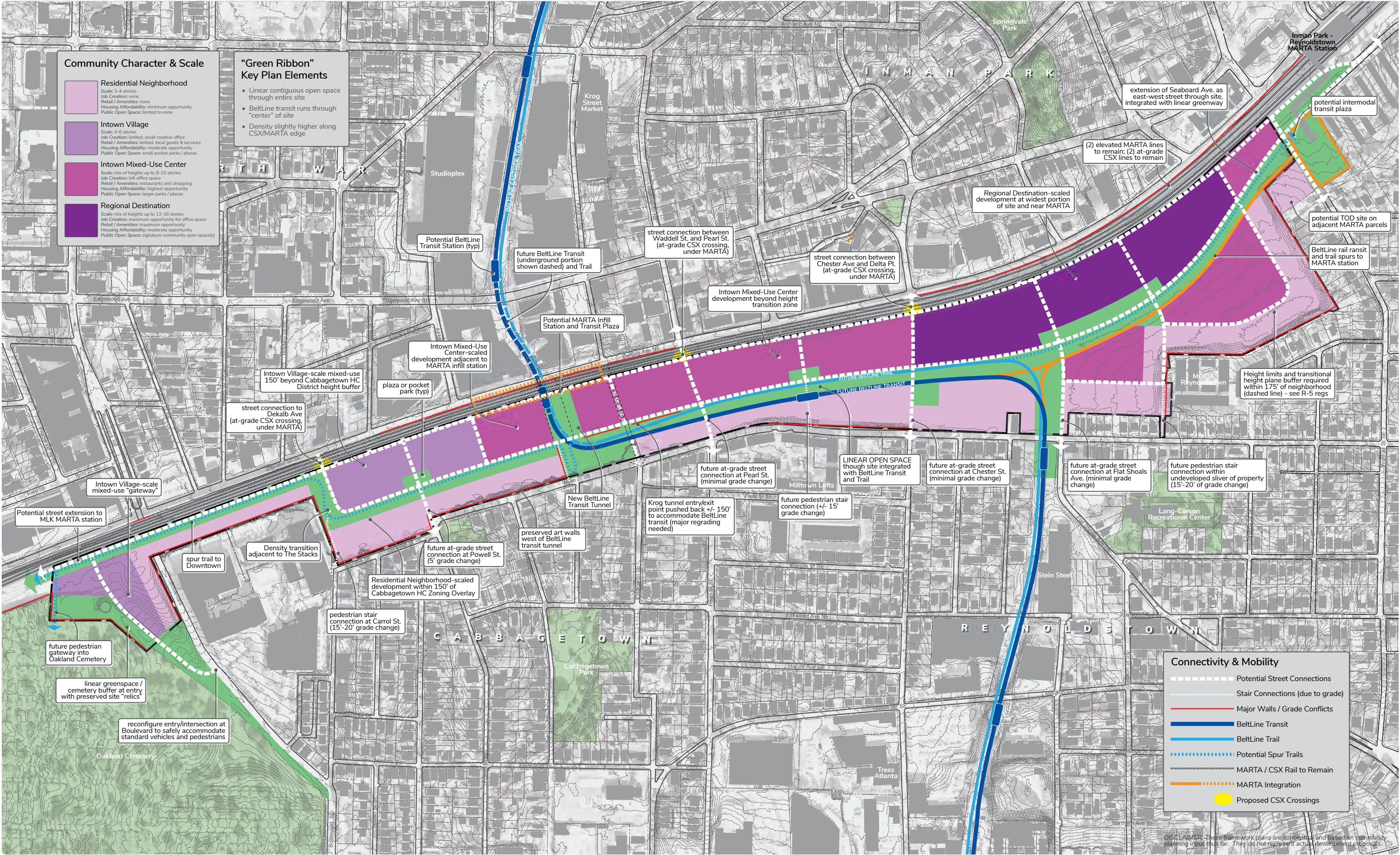
- Residential Neighborhood**
Scale: 3-4 stories
Job Creation: none
Retail / Amenities: none
Housing Affordability: minimum opportunity
Public Open Space: limited to none
- Intown Village**
Scale: 4-6 stories
Job Creation: limited, small creative office
Retail / Amenities: limited, local goods & services
Housing Affordability: moderate opportunity
Public Open Space: small pocket parks / plazas
- Intown Mixed-Use Center**
Scale: mix of heights up to 8-10 stories
Job Creation: loft office space
Retail / Amenities: restaurants and shopping
Housing Affordability: highest opportunity
Public Open Space: larger parks / plazas
- Regional Destination**
Scale: mix of heights up to 12-16 stories
Job Creation: maximum opportunity for office space
Retail / Amenities: maximum opportunity
Housing Affordability: moderate opportunity
Public Open Space: signature community open space(s)

“Hulsey Squares” Key Plan Elements

- Medium-sized open spaces equally dispersed
- Savannah-inspired grid layout
- BeltLine transit runs along edge of site
- Density slightly higher at two MARTA rail stations (both current and potential stations)

Connectivity & Mobility

- Potential Street Connections
- Stair Connections (due to grade)
- Major Walls / Grade Conflicts
- BeltLine Transit
- BeltLine Trail
- Potential Spur Trails
- MARTA / CSX Rail to Remain
- MARTA Integration
- Proposed CSX Crossings



Hulsey Redevelopment Fundamentals

The Hulsey Yard master planning process involved thousands of area residents and stakeholders through multiple open houses, multi-day workshops, online surveys, stakeholder meetings and steering committee brainstorming sessions. The previously-described Redevelopment Framework Plan concepts graphically depict physical development interventions for the site that grew out of the process and were later vetted by the four most impacted neighborhoods. These options represent the collective neighborhoods’ overall vision, yet are realistic, flexible and implementable. Concepts are based upon sound real estate assumptions, local and national precedents and the planning team’s extensive experience working in the public and private sectors.

In Atlanta particularly, two of the primary risks from a development standpoint are *return on investment* and *neighborhood buy-in*. As neighbors to the site, the team and community's goal has been to help explore these two questions up-front for any parties interested in development. We have tried to limit the guesswork by preparing this plan in a very transparent and participatory way. The important neighborhood consensus points are captured below within eleven *Hulsey Redevelopment Fundamentals* – or “must-haves” – needed to ensure a successful development while enhancing the collective neighborhoods’ already high quality of life.

Connect new streets to Dekalb Avenue *via new at-grade CSX crossings. The site is severely constricted by a lack of connectivity to the north. New street connections are critical for new development as better access will allow for more density. More density generally increases a developer’s return on investment, which in turn will command a substantially higher land value and resulting sale price for CSX. New street connections are also key towards better-managing vehicular traffic.*

Establish a public street grid *through the site that is connected and integrated with the surrounding neighborhoods. Block sizes should be consistent with adjacent existing neighborhood blocks.*

Embrace modal options. *Streets should be sized and designed to equitably facilitate a variety of transportation modes including pedestrians, cyclists, scooterists and vehicles. All streets should be “complete streets.”*

Implement shared parking *areas/decks district-wide. De-couple parking decks from new building construction where feasible. Allow future residents and businesses to rent or purchase parking space(s) a la carte so as to limit overbuilding parking.*

Prioritize affordable housing *as part of new development. Affordability is contingent upon many factors including reduced construction cost, construction replicability and funding subsidy. This Master Plan supports density as long as it accommodates affordable housing options that meet or exceed the current BeltLine Overlay required minimums.*

Preserve the BeltLine corridor *through the site to accommodate future BeltLine transit and a more permanent trail connection. Take measures to ensure that future development does not encroach upon this preserved land.*

Advance BeltLine rail. *Potential growth and development of Hulsey Yard as outlined in this master plan is highly contingent on implementation of BeltLine light rail as a critical public transit connection.*

Integrate with MARTA. *BeltLine transit only works if connected with MARTA rail in a meaningful way. This plan outlines both shorter- and longer-term options for this integration.*

Reserve space for a large park. *Creating a large contiguous open space as part of new development truly makes Hulsey Yard part of the community. It also provides a canvas for the site’s railroad history to be celebrated.*

Respect and Strengthen Height Transitions *to adjacent neighborhoods. Improvements can be made to the Cabbagetown Landmark District zoning to strengthen height transitions while providing more flexibility for affordable housing and neighborhood amenities.*

Ensure Architectural Quality and Building Flexibility *as part of new construction. Embracing smart density is meant to also facilitate quality architecture that is designed flexibly so that building uses can evolve over time and lead to a more dynamic, organic district (as opposed to feeling like one, monolithic master planned project).*

CONNECT NEW STREETS TO DEKALB AVENUE

Where once was four, now is one

As previously mentioned, at least four streets historically connected neighborhoods across Hulsey Yard. However, despite the area’s dramatic growth in recent decades, Krog Tunnel remains as the only remaining street crossing for the roughly mile-and-a-half stretch between the Boulevard and Moreland Avenue railroad underpasses. Simply put, Krog cannot support current transportation demands, much less the demands of 78 acres of future urban redevelopment along the Atlanta BeltLine. Hulsey Yard’s potential as a redevelopment site therefore hinges upon the ability to create new street connections to Dekalb Avenue either under, over or across the active CSX line (or all of the above). Increased traffic volume and mobility demands along Dekalb Avenue combined with a recently-connected BeltLine trail via Krog have exacerbated queuing, increased trip times and amplified pedestrian/cyclist safety concerns on both sides of the Krog Tunnel.

Krog cannot support current transportation demands, much less the demands of 78 acres of future urban redevelopment along the Atlanta BeltLine. Hulsey Yard’s potential as a redevelopment site therefore hinges upon the ability to create new street connections to Dekalb Avenue either under, over or across the active CSX line (or all of the above).

CSX Street Crossing Policy

The CSX manual entitled “Public Project Information for Construction and Improvement Projects That May Involve the Railroad” gives some guidance on CSX policy related to creation of new crossings:

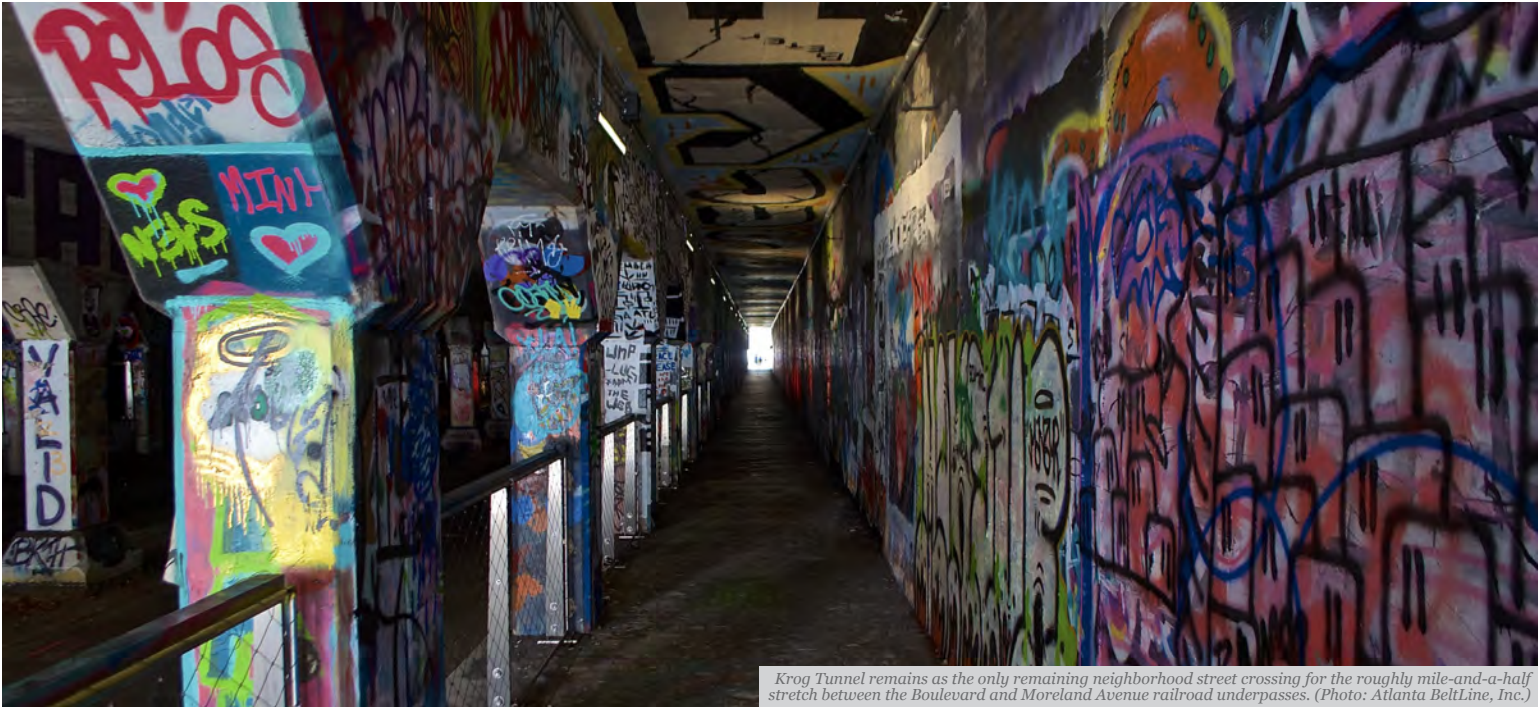
CSX understands the importance of highway-rail grade crossings and

their relevance to such priorities as economic development, emergency vehicle access and other growth opportunities in the communities through which we operate. Because of the safety concerns associated with highway-rail grade crossings, however, every effort must be made to obtain alternative access or additional capacity using grade separations, or by other roads leading to existing crossings.

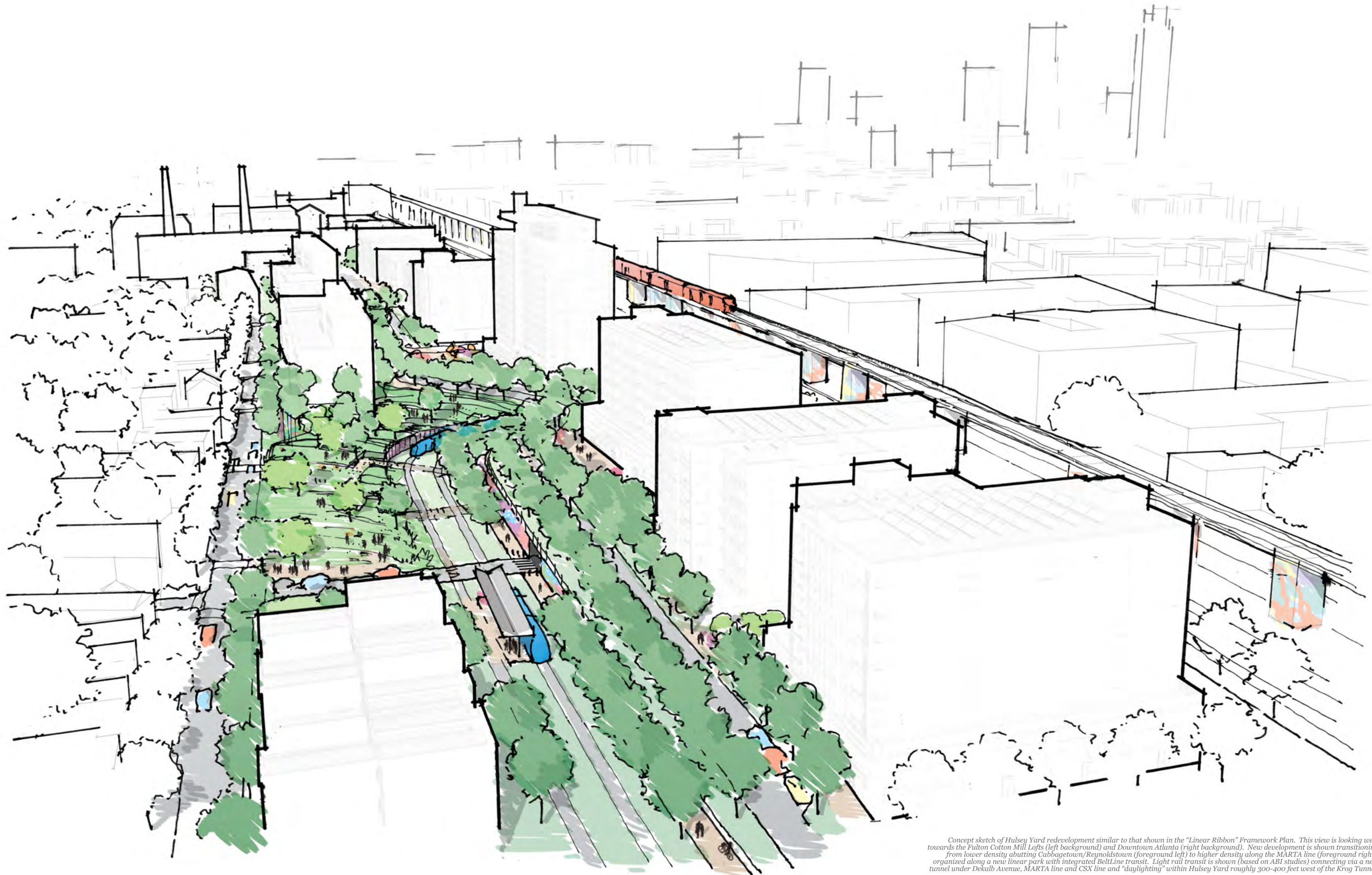
Under, Over or Across?

For decades, planning efforts for Hulsey Yard have studied and speculated ways to get across the site with as little disturbance to the active freight line as possible. The presence of the elevated MARTA line suggests that potential elevated street crossings over CSX are next to impossible. A BeltLine transit tunnel under the CSX line has been studied extensively by Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. and deemed at least physically possible in the context of major transit infrastructure. However, additional potential underground street connections appear physically and financially unfeasible (based on the planning team’s cursory investigations) given the adjacency of historic neighborhoods, limited existing right-of-ways, prevalence of major retaining walls and presence of MARTA rail facilities. Based on site walks and existing topography, three new at-grade crossings were deemed at least physically possible and have thus become a key component of all redevelopment framework plan options:

- New north-south through street connecting Delta Place to Chester Avenue*
- New north-south through street connecting Waddell Street to Pearl Street*
- New north-south street connecting new development to Dekalb Avenue (near Bradley Street on the western portion of the site)*



Krog Tunnel remains as the only remaining neighborhood street crossing for the roughly mile-and-a-half stretch between the Boulevard and Moreland Avenue railroad underpasses. (Photo: Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.)



Concept sketch of Hulsey Yard redevelopment similar to that shown in the "Linear Ribbon" Framework Plan. This view is looking west towards the Fulton Cotton Mill Lofts (left background) and Downtown Atlanta (right background). New development is shown transitioning from lower density abutting Cabbagetown/Reynoldstown (foreground left) to higher density along the MARTA line (foreground right), organized along a new linear park with integrated BeltLine transit. Light rail transit is shown (based on ABI studies) connecting via a new tunnel under Dekalb Avenue, MARTA line and CSX line and "daylighting" within Hulsey Yard roughly 300-400 feet west of the Krog Tunnel.

Chester/Delta Re-Connection at Dekalb

Because the MARTA line is elevated, it is a less problematic component of the barrier to overcome than the CSX line. The primary physical constraints for the MARTA line are a) the columns (spaced 70 feet apart), and b) the at-grade portion of the line and associated retaining walls that exist east of the proposed Delta Place/Chester Ave connection. These areas are indicated in red on the Framework Plans. The potential re-connection of Chester/Delta at Dekalb does exhibit some grade and visibility challenges. For example, roughly 5-10 feet of grade change exists between the CSX line and the roadway at the intersection of Delta/Dekalb. There may also be some sight/visibility issues related the retaining wall to the east along the south side of Dekalb. The location and alignment of where Chester/Delta meets Dekalb may need to shift and should therefore be carefully studied.

ESTABLISH A PUBLIC STREET GRID

Although Hulsey Yard may grow into its neighborhood with its own unique identity, maximizing its interconnectedness to Cabbagetown, Inman Park, Old Fourth Ward and Reynoldstown is fundamental to the success of its redevelopment. It will therefore be critical to establish a “master” street grid within Hulsey from day one and strictly adhered to as development is phased. Currently the Cabbagetown Landmark District limits block sizes/faces to 400 feet for the western portion of the site. Likewise, BeltLine Overlay district encourages “a grid of smaller blocks and connected streets to improve access to the BeltLine, reduce congestion, and further the urban character of the area.” Future regulations for Hulsey Yard should mandate (rather than simply encourage) maximum block sizes of 400 feet per this Master Plan.

Seaboard Spine

Seaboard Avenue exists today as a relatively short (roughly ¼ mile long) street connecting Moreland Avenue/Edgewood Retail District to the Inman Park/Reynoldstown MARTA Station. It previously served as one of two primary entries to the site when Hulsey served as an intermodal yard (the other being the “ramp” from Boulevard).

Seaboard Avenue’s extension not only through Hulsey Yard - but between Downtown Atlanta and Decatur - has potential to act as a key multimodal corridor within the city’s larger transportation network, potentially taking modal pressures off Dekalb Avenue and creating a direct bike/pedestrian route between four MARTA Rail Stations.

Extending Seaboard Avenue west through Hulsey Yard is an important and powerful component of the future plan for a number of reasons. Given the property’s linear shape, such a street would act as a primary “spine” of the development, connecting Moreland Avenue to the east with Oakland Cemetery/Boulevard to the west (roughly 1.5 miles long). It would also serve to complement and relieve Dekalb Avenue as a primary east-west connector. Compared to other street connections,



Seaboard is also something that could be implemented more easily as an at-grade street without tunnels, bridges or rail crossings.

As previously mentioned, technically Hulsey Yard is six miles long from an operational standpoint spanning across most of Atlanta’s east side (see the Background Section of this document). In this context, Seaboard Avenue also represents an incredible longer-term opportunity to create an entirely new east-west street/trail extension not only through Hulsey Yard, but connecting the neighborhoods of Downtown, Oakland, Cabbagetown, Reynoldstown, Edgewood, Kirkwood and East Lake.

Street Extensions to/from Cabbagetown and Reynoldstown

In addition to creating new Street Connections to Dekalb Avenue and establishing Seaboard Avenue as an east-west spine, the Master Plan hinges on extending existing Cabbagetown and Reynoldstown streets into (and sometimes through) Hulsey Yard.

- *Powell Street* – Although historically Powell was a tunnel, its reuse as a tunnel may be unlikely both from a financial and safety standpoint. However, given that only 5 feet of grade change exists on either side of the retaining wall near its intersection with Wylie, Powell Street could easily be extended northward into Hulsey Yard. Given the height of the art walls (as much as 30’ tall) along the north edge of Cabbagetown (and desire for those walls to be preserved), Powell appears to be the only potential street connection into the site between Boulevard and the BeltLine.
- *Pearl Street* – Minimal grade change exists between Hulsey Yard and the intersection of Wylie/Pearl, suggesting that Pearl Street’s northern extension would be relatively simple from a constructability point of view. As previously mentioned, Pearl is recommended to connect through the site to roughly the intersection of Dekalb/Waddell to the north.
- *Chester Avenue* – Formerly Delta Place, Chester served as a major neighborhood street connection between Reynoldstown and Inman Park up until the 1940s. Unsurprisingly, minimal grade change still exists between the yard and the intersection of Chester/Wylie. Chester Avenue’s re-connection into the yard is therefore relatively simple (at least physically).
- *Flat Shoals Avenue* – Flat Shoals Avenue’s northward extension into the site would serve as a primary gateway between Hulsey Yard and Reynoldstown and reinforce it as a key multimodal connection between Hulsey and Memorial Drive. Grade-wise, the segment of Wylie between Chester and Flat Shoals is a relatively flat condition between the yard and the neighborhood and could be traversed more easily with new streets such as Flat Shoals Avenue.

It is important to note that many of Cabbagetown and Reynoldstown’s streets are extremely narrow and cannot reasonably support larger freight and service-related vehicles. As plans for Hulsey Yard progress, new street connections should be carefully located and designed to strategically direct and limit certain types of vehicular access.





EMBRACE MODAL OPTIONS

Mobility in Atlanta has seen significant change over the past five years. In many ways, implementation of the BeltLine Eastside Trail has brought local cycling culture into the mainstream. Amplified by a rapid rise in e-scooters and bikeshare programs, the public perception about urban transportation has shifted substantially. What intown Atlantans used to refer to as a *traffic problem* is now more widely acknowledged as a *car dependency problem*. The push-and-pull between local trips and regional trips fuels the continued debate about what constitutes a “complete street.”

What intown Atlantans used to refer to as a **traffic problem** is now more widely acknowledged as a **car dependency problem**.

Hulsey Yard exists at the nexus of existing transit, future transit, multiple trail connections, dozens of bike routes and pedestrian-scaled streets. At the same time, the site’s connections to major urban arterial and collector streets are very limited. Considering these unique opportunities and constraints, Hulsey Yard represents a rare opportunity to create a truly integrated street, rail and trail network that prioritizes bikes, pedestrians, scooters and transit users as equally as it does automobiles. After all, the target market for future residents, companies and business owners of Hulsey Yard is unlikely to be one that prioritizes getting in and out quickly by car over placemaking and quality of life.

IMPLEMENT SHARED PARKING

Car ownership in urban areas is decreasing nationwide while rideshare and other mobility services continue to increase. Many new homeowners or renters no longer need or use reserved parking. One strategy to ensuring affordability and build quality is de-coupling structured parking from new building construction. Creating shared parking decks for multiple buildings and land uses would provide more choices to future residents and business owners, allowing them to either opt-in (for a fee) or opt-out of reserved parking space(s). In other words, a parking space would not automatically come with the purchase or rental of your home. You would pay for that separate just as you do a monthly gym membership. Removing structured parking from the cost of development (often \$20,000 per space or more) incentivizes developers to construct more affordable housing units.

Creative strategies for implementing shared parking decks will be a key component in the planning of Hulsey Yard. Some opportunities could include co-funding by multiple developers, public-private partnerships (MARTA, City of Atlanta), and/or any of Atlanta’s numerous private parking entities.

It is also worth noting that all MRC districts with office uses over 100,000 sf (likely within Hulsey Yard) are required to become a member of an existing transportation management association and provide a transportation management plan with incentives for commute alternatives, mobility resources and transit incentives.



PRIORITIZE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

An Affordability Crisis

It is widely acknowledged that intown Atlanta – like many other cities – is facing an affordability crisis. Hulsey Yard’s location between some Atlanta’s highest-cost communities makes it all the more critical to get affordable housing right as part of redeveloping this site. The four adjacent historic neighborhoods are also home to roughly 15,000 people, many of whom are legacy residents whose retention is critical to the tenets of this masterplan.

Given its location within the Atlanta BeltLine Overlay District, Hulsey Yard redevelopment would automatically be held to the City’s minimum Inclusionary Zoning standards which require developers to set aside at least 10% of units for households earning 60% AMI (Area Median Income) or 15% of units for households earning 80% AMI. However, based on recent public input, it is the strong consensus of the neighborhoods that BeltLine’s inclusionary zoning requirements have not done enough to incentivize true affordability. THE primary reason for the Master Plan’s embrace of density is therefore to help incent and offset construction costs of new affordable housing units in Hulsey Yard. Neighborhood leaders strongly state that their support of future development proposals will hinge on the ability of development teams to exceed BeltLine affordable housing requirements in innovative ways.

Also see *Atlanta BeltLine Affordable Housing Working Group Report (2018)* for more detailed affordable housing recommendations.

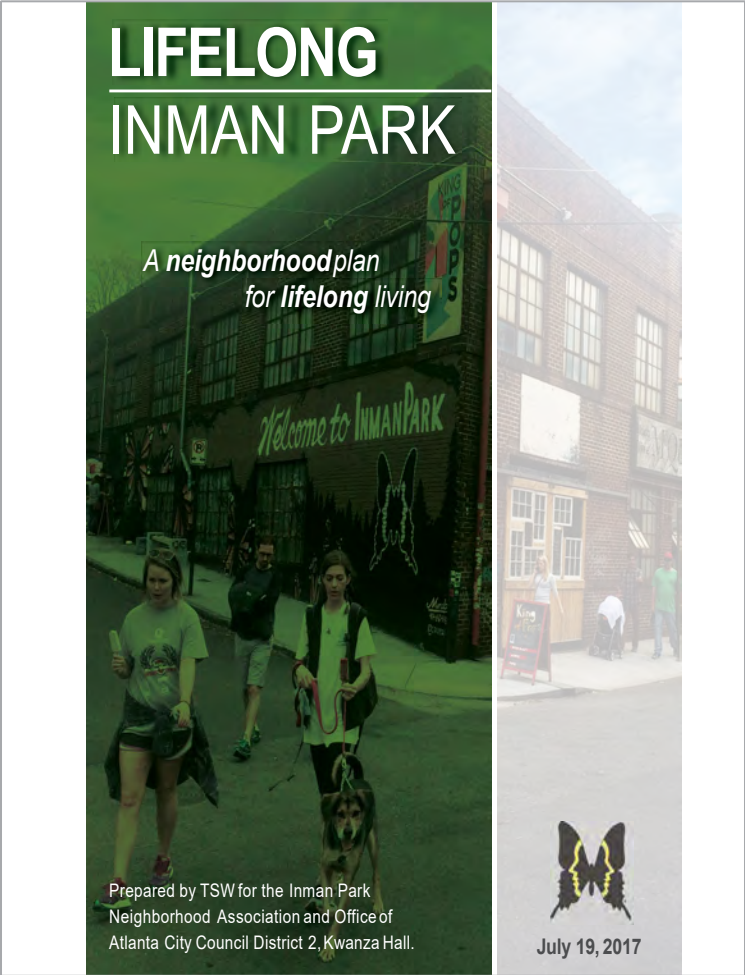
Lifelong Communities

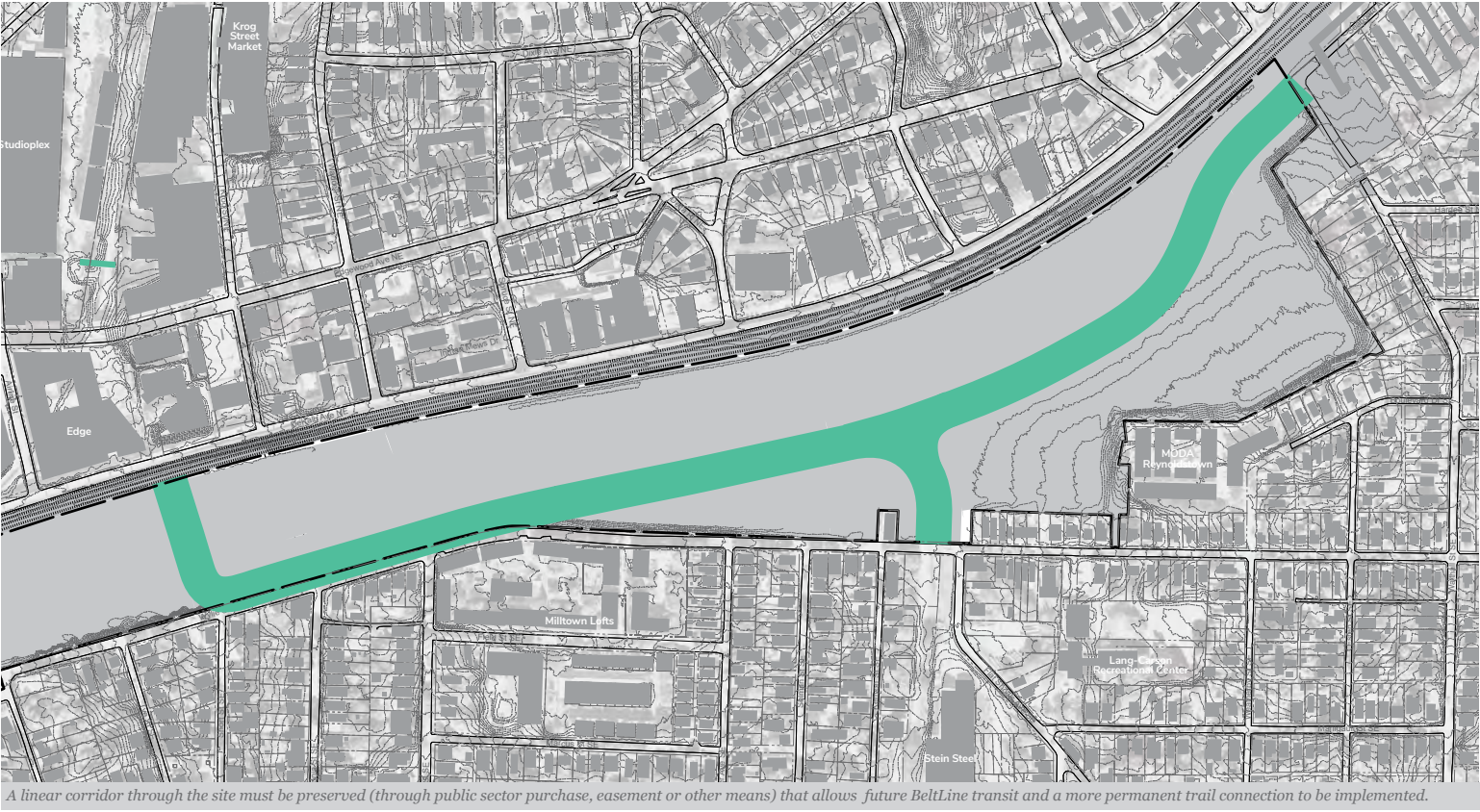
Forbes magazine recently called Atlanta the nation’s fastest-aging region. Similarly, the Atlanta Regional Commission projects that one in five residents will be over 60 by the year 2030. Despite a heavy demand for senior housing in Atlanta, it is in short supply.

The *Lifelong Inman Park Study (2017)* outlines seven principles of Lifelong Communities, which include:

- Diversity of Dwelling Types
- Connectivity
- Pedestrian Access to Transit
- Neighborhood Retail and Services
- Social Interaction
- Healthy Living
- Consideration of Existing Residents.

Hulsey masterplan fundamentals overlap with these principles in many ways, suggesting that the site is uniquely positioned to absorb this senior housing demand. Hulsey Yard currently offers a range of mobility alternatives, access to MARTA rail, activities that support healthy living (BeltLine and open spaces) and social interaction (comparatively dense urban neighborhoods). Given that senior housing parking demands are often much lower than conventional housing types, Hulsey is an ideal site with its focus on shared parking strategies.





A linear corridor through the site must be preserved (through public sector purchase, easement or other means) that allows future BeltLine transit and a more permanent trail connection to be implemented.

PRESERVE THE BELTLINE CORRIDOR

A linear corridor through the site must be preserved to allow BeltLine transit and a more permanent trail connection to be constructed. As diagrammed above, this corridor would extend roughly ¼ mile through the site, connecting to the current BeltLine alignment on both the Old Fourth Ward side (to the north/west) and the Reynoldstown side (to the south/east). ABI guidelines note roughly 120’ of minimum width needed for Transit and Trail Right-of-Way. This equates to roughly 8 acres of additional land within Hulsey that should be land-banked, reserved (via easement) and/or purchased by public sector partners for future BeltLine transit.

Permanent BeltLine Trail Connection

The current BeltLine Eastside Trail routing via the Krog Tunnel – albeit extremely constrained – has served to provide a critical trail connection under Hulsey Yard in its role as an intermodal freight terminal. As a future mixed-use district with a multimodal focus, Hulsey Yard should embrace a more permanent BeltLine Eastside Trail connection across the site.

The planning team looked initially at a few options for the future BeltLine Trail connection. Bridging over Dekalb Avenue does not seem possible due to the presence of the elevated MARTA structure and the need to maintain freight access across the CSX line. A new at-grade BeltLine Trail crossing into Hulsey Yard might be possible, however, there are major challenges that limit it as a truly safe and reliable

solution. In addition to crossing a busy Dekalb Avenue, the trail would also need to cross the active CSX lines (which will close many times a day for passing trains). Yet another option for the future BeltLine trail might be creating a tunnel under both Dekalb Avenue and the CSX line. While there are safety and design challenges that would need to be addressed, an underground connection could likely be coupled with a construction of a BeltLine transit tunnel.

Overall, the Krog trail section should continue to serve as an important secondary pedestrian connection in the future, however, the potential of a “full” BeltLine trail connection to Hulsey that prioritizes pedestrian/cyclist safety should be carefully studied. Instead of abutting Wylie Street (narrow right-of-way and a variety of conflicts), the ideal BeltLine trail alignment should run more centrally through the site so that development can directly engage with it.

ADVANCE BELTLINE RAIL

BeltLine rail transit is absolutely fundamental to realizing Hulsey Yard’s full potential. Given that it is one of the most substantial physical obstacles on the entire BeltLine, Hulsey Yard’s potential change of ownership opens the door for transit to be prioritized by MARTA and The City of Atlanta.

There are several important political, policy and planning steps that should be taken related to prioritizing BeltLine rail transit. First – directly related to preserving the BeltLine corridor – lies in developing partnerships with potential Hulsey Yard land owner(s) that allow this land to be preserved for rail implementation in the near future.

The property’s potential transition as non-railroad-owned also creates a shift in how local planning efforts and agencies should think of the site. Rather than a “long term opportunity”, Hulsey Yard can now be considered imminent – a key piece of the City’s growth with rail transit as its centerpiece. A second step towards prioritizing transit includes reflecting and reinforcing Hulsey Yard as THE preferred BeltLine transit route within all City of Atlanta, Atlanta BeltLine Inc, MARTA and Atlanta Regional Commission-led planning studies.

INTEGRATE WITH MARTA

As is widely recognized, BeltLine transit doesn’t work without direct integration with the MARTA system. As such, several potential short and long-term MARTA connections were explored as part of the planning process. Detailed financial and engineering studies for such integration was not included as part of this plan. Instead, the plan took recent transit studies (by others) at face value, reflecting them as options to be discussed and vetted by the public in terms of their benefit to the BeltLine and Hulsey Yard. The options were also discussed with Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. and MARTA leadership to ensure that they were in sync with ongoing planning efforts.

Light Rail Spur Line

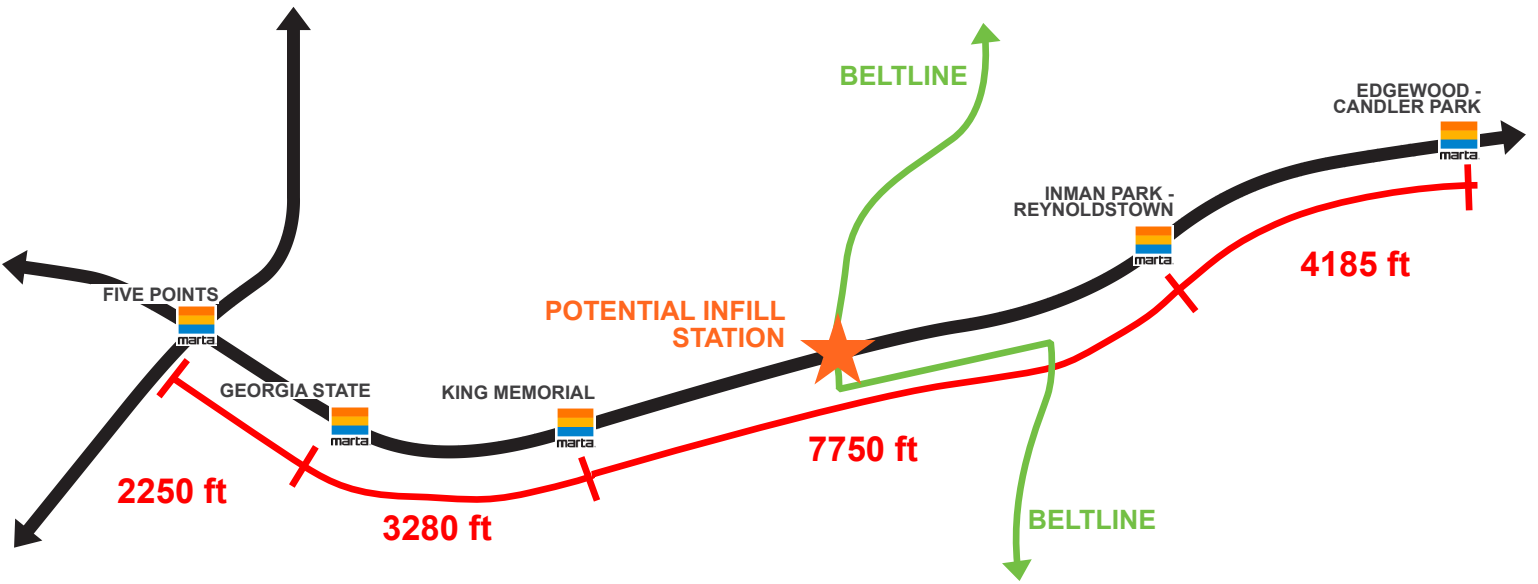
As illustrated on the Framework plans, a slightly shorter-term option for MARTA integration would be creating a “spur” light rail line off the BeltLine transit corridor, connecting to the Inman Park-Reynoldstown MARTA station. This transit line would extend roughly 2000’ linear feet and include a parallel spur trail – all following the alignment of the Seaboard Avenue multimodal spine through Hulsey Yard. It is worth mentioning that preliminary transit studies have indicated that this spur line could add notable trip time to BeltLine transit (i.e. increased time for transit users not transferring to MARTA).

Integration of the spur transit line also opens up the possibility of reimagining the current MARTA bus dropoff loop (near Walthall/Seaboard) as a dynamic multimodal transit plaza connecting heavy rail, light rail and local bus transit together.

Potential MARTA Infill Station

A longer-term (yet more impactful) option for MARTA integration would be creation of a new infill MARTA station near its crossing with the BeltLine. The opportunities offered by a new MARTA station at this location are numerous. It would unlock the full potential of BeltLine transit integration and create maximum value for the yard, positioning Hulsey as a true model of transit-oriented development in Atlanta. The MARTA rail segment between the MLK Station and the Inman Park/Reynoldstown Station (along Hulsey Yard) represents one of the longest spans between rail stations in the entire MARTA system. As such, locating a new station here would increase transit access to adjacent neighborhoods dramatically.

It is important to point out that preliminary studies related to the MARTA infill station have also exposed several challenges. First, the segment of the elevated MARTA line over the BeltLine runs along a curve and historically MARTA has avoided constructing stations along curves for a number of engineering and user safety reasons. Another challenge would be disruptions to MARTA rail operations during construction of the station (imagine the entire MARTA east line being closed for a year or more!). Operational impacts to the CSX are another challenge as the CSX rail line would likely need to be temporarily routed through Hulsey Yard during construction of the station. Such physical, financial and operational implications would obviously need to be studied extensively if implementation of a new station is pursued.



The MARTA rail segment between the MLK Station and the Inman Park/Reynoldstown Station (along Hulsey Yard) represents one of the longest spans between rail stations in the entire MARTA system. As such, locating a new station here would create the most ideal BeltLine/MARTA transfer point which dramatically increasing transit access to adjacent neighborhoods. (Image based on diagram and thesis by Carlton W. Ingram, 2015)



Sketch illustrating a large park and adjacent development similar to the "Roundhouse Park" Framework Plan. This "birds eye" view over Reynoldstown (foreground) looks north towards Inman Park.

RESERVE SPACE FOR A LARGE PARK

“I want the whole thing to be a park” was a common sentiment of neighbors throughout the planning efforts. While unrealistic, it does reinforce creation of public park space as a primary theme of the masterplan. Many planning activities and questions were crafted in order to gather feedback on how such park space would be arranged and where it might occur. A clear consensus was reached that prioritizes creating one larger contiguous park rather than creating a series of smaller more dispersed parks.

The large park illustrated in the sketch on the previous page is a reflection of this common theme, showing a roughly 7-acre greenspace within the more spacious eastern half of the site at the crossing of BeltLine rail and MARTA spur rail and at the original location of the former Roundhouse building. Many workshop residents also mentioned Reynoldstown’s current lack of a significant neighborhood park (some noting that Lang Carson serves more as a community center than an active park) and gravitated towards locating a larger Hulsey Park to the east for that reason as well. A larger park to the east also helps balance the accommodation of higher density near the current MARTA station. The roundhouse building’s shape might be abstracted through the landscape design, as part of an open pavilion structure, amphitheater, large plaza and/or interactive cultural feature that pays homage to the site’s railroad legacy.

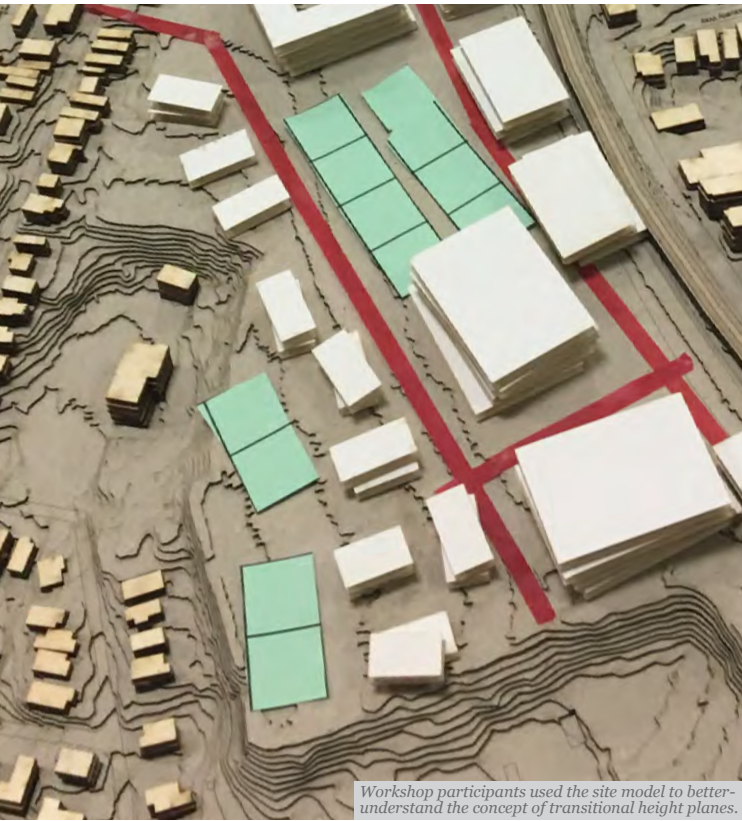
Reserving space for a large park would ideally be done in tandem with “freezing” the land for the BeltLine corridor (roughly 15 acres combined). Reserving/preserving such land could be achieved through public-private partnerships between the eventual private land owner and public entities (Atlanta BeltLine, Inc., City of Atlanta, The Trust for Public Land, MARTA, etc.) through purchase, easement or other means. It should also be noted that all potential zoning categories for Hulsey would require somewhere between 10-20% of the site to be reserved for open space.



RESPECT AND STRENGTHEN HEIGHT TRANSITIONS

An important aspect of this masterplan to understand is the concept of transitional heights (sometimes called transitional height planes) between future higher densities in Hulsey Yard and adjacent existing lower-density historic neighborhoods. These transitions are critical in accommodating “smart density” (more affordability, more senior housing, transit-oriented, less parking, more amenities) on the site while maintaining the high quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods. Assuming Hulsey yard is rezoned from I-2 (Industrial) to an MRC (Mixed-Use) category or similar, transitional heights will be required automatically where they abut most existing residential zoning districts and historic districts. Current examples include the R-5 districts (majority of Reynoldstown) and Historic HC districts (majority of Cabbagetown). A diagram of the potential future required transitional heights are shown on the Regulatory Analysis diagram included within the Appendix.

A handful of parcels within Reynoldstown and Cabbagetown are not currently “protected” through required height transitions. More detailed regulatory/zoning recommendations are outlined within the Zoning & Regulatory Recommendations section of this document.



ENSURE ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY AND BUILDING FLEXIBILITY

Intown Atlanta has seen massive architectural homogenization in the wake of the great recession. Increased construction costs, heightened zoning restrictions and pressures to deliver affordable housing have coincided with spikes in demand for both for-rent and for-sale housing, resulting in repetitive surges of deck-wrapped wood frame and “podium” building construction. Given the propensity for Atlanta developers to work with wood frame construction and that building codes only allow wood frame construction up to 5-6 stories, developers find themselves maxing-out the allowed building envelope (Floor Area Ratio) in order to maximize their profit. This trend combined with an increasing apathy to spend money or effort on inspirational design, has resulted in an influx of monotonous 6-story-boxes with varying degrees of the same “skin” attached. Such buildings are rarely sensitive to the history or context of neighborhoods around them, unable to evolve to changing market conditions or adapt to building uses other than residential.

The premier location of Hulsey Yard and the legacy of historic preservation in its surrounding neighborhoods demand development that is architecturally memorable and community-responsive. Smart density is embraced as a way to incent good design, maximize sustainable development, and allow for buildings that can adapt to various uses from office to residential to institutional. In the spirit of decreasing car ownership, increased rideshare resources and rising mobility options, structured parking decks should also be thought of as “shells” for other uses.

Zoning & Regulatory Recommendations

Respecting and strengthening height transitions between Hulsey Yard and the neighborhoods is a fundamental approach of this plan. There are several options for requiring these transitional heights (many of which are already required) which relate directly to which type of future zoning will be applied to the property. Recommendations are outlined as follows related to both the future zoning of Hulsey as well as strengthening zoning of adjacent neighborhood districts.

HULSEY YARD REZONING

The property is currently within the BeltLine Overlay District, which includes regulations related to open space types and amounts, connectivity, parking, trail connections, mobility, sidewalks, landscaping, architectural design and relationship of buildings to streets. However, given that the underlying zoning of the site is currently I-2 (Industrial) a rezoning of the property is imminent for any future land uses other than industrial. This planning effort has therefore moved forward under the assumption that the property would be rezoned to another category that facilitates this masterplan and vision.

Potential MRC (Mixed Residential Commercial) District

MRC (Mixed Residential Commercial) would be a likely future underlying zoning designation for the site. Of the district types within MRC, MRC-3 is perhaps the most accommodating of the fundamentals of this masterplan because it allows the highest Floor Area Ratio (FAR), which in turn allows the most flexibility for incorporating of affordable housing and “smart density.” The maximum FAR allowed under MRC-3 with all affordable housing and open spaces bonuses is



Transitional height requirements should be strengthened between Hulsey Yard and adjacent Fulton Cotton Mill Lofts / The Stacks (image: Bing Maps)

8.2. It should also be noted again that the MRC ordinance already requires transitional uses and yards (sec. 16-34.009) for the first 150’ abutting R-1 through R-5, RG-1 and RG-2, MR1 and MR2 and Landmark Districts.

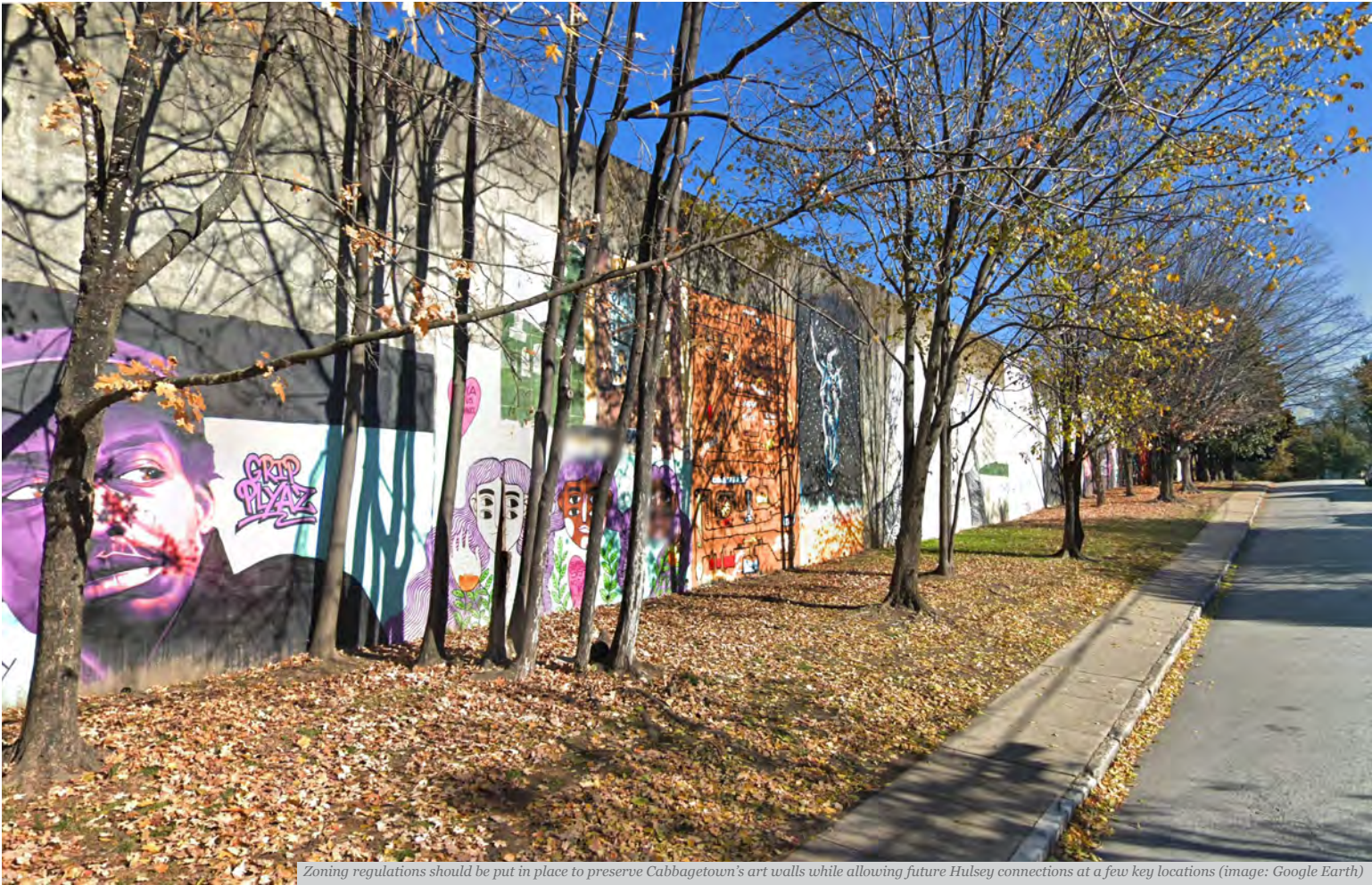
Potential Standalone Overlay Zoning District

Although Hulsey Yard is not likely a candidate for a Historic District Overlay (does not include historic buildings with character-defining features), it may be a candidate for another type of overlay such as an SPI (Special Public Interest) District. Such an overlay would put in place developmental regulations such as additional transitional height planes, architectural requirements, Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and others that are more unique and site-specific rather than relying on more generic MRC and BeltLine Overlay requirements.

The Hulsey Yard Study Committee should engage the City of Atlanta Office of Zoning & Development to explore the viability of future overlay zoning for this site.

NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITIONS & PROTECTIONS

As a follow-up to one of the key goals – “Analyze current zoning regulations in adjacent neighborhoods and make recommendations for strengthening those regulations” – current regulations were analyzed in the context of the resulting masterplan. It is important to acknowledge that the following are not likely developer-led actions, but rather neighborhood-led actions that should be pursued prior to a Hulsey land sale.



Zoning regulations should be put in place to preserve Cabbagetown’s art walls while allowing future Hulsey connections at a few key locations (image: Google Earth)

Existing Cabbagetown Landmark District – Potential Improvements

Cabbagetown is fortunate to have previously-instituted the Cabbagetown Landmark District zoning overlay, including Subarea 5 (Transitional Commercial/Industrial) which covers portions of Memorial Drive frontage as well as a portion of Hulsey Yard. However, Hulsey Yard (currently and in the future) has/will have completely different characteristics than Memorial Drive. Land use and density for Hulsey Yard should therefore be considered differently than other areas in Cabbagetown. After a careful review of the current (2019) Subarea 5 ordinance, several amendments could be made to make it stronger in terms of density transitions to adjacent neighborhoods as well as more accommodating to desired uses and affordability. Alternately, a new Subarea 6 (Industrial Transition) category could be created in lieu of revising Subarea 5 requirements. Inconsistencies between the masterplan fundamentals and current Subarea 5 regulations are summarized as follows.

Height Transitions - Subarea 5 includes transitional heights to Subarea 3 (Sec. 16-20A.011, 5d1), but does not include similar protections to Subarea 1 (the Mill). It is recommended that similar protections for Subarea 1 adjacencies be added. Those recommended height transition areas are diagrammed on all on Framework Plan options.

Maximum Heights and Square Footages – The height limit of 52’ (Sec. 16-20A.011, 5b) on the Dekalb side of Subarea 5 indirectly limits the potential for future neighborhood-oriented retail and affordable housing (two main points of this masterplan). The neighborhood should consider a slight increase in this maximum height from 52’ to 75’, which would allow up to 6 floors of development (a more common building size with ground floor retail). A potential height increase would only apply to buildings farther than 150’ from historic areas (not visible due to retaining walls along Wylie), so would not compromise height transitions or site limitations within neighborhood “buffer” areas. All current height limitations within 150’ would still apply.

Preservation of Art Walls – Many participants in this masterplan noted that murals/art walls along the north side of Wylie were important parts of Cabbagetown’s cultural identity, yet no regulations exist to preserve those areas. It is recommended that protections for these walls be included as part of any future amendments to this Subarea overlay. Such recommendations should balance the need for future street and/or pedestrian connections to be made through the wall where grade permits (see framework plans).

Reynoldstown - Potential Additional Height Transitions

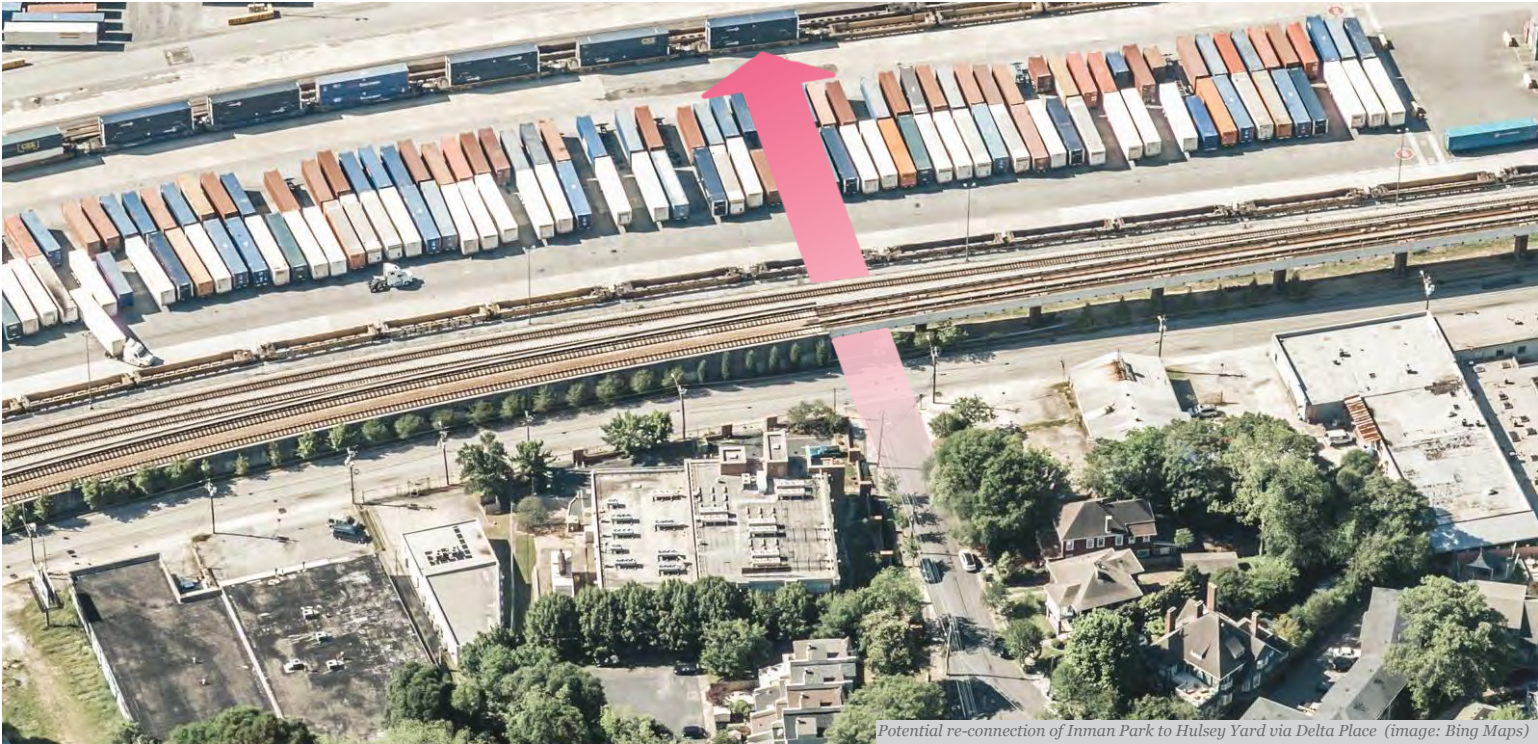
It is important to point out two land parcels in Reynoldstown where height transitions under MRC are not currently required:

- 1. A collection of land parcels roughly bounded by Wylie, Marcus, Pearl and Chester, which are currently zoned C-1-C. This area includes Milltown Lofts, Reynoldstown Senior Residences and two townhome communities. While height transitions are required where C districts abut “protected” districts, stringent height transitions are not required between MRC districts and C-1-C. This leaves some of the frontage on Wylie Street “unprotected” in the absence of a standalone overlay zoning district. That said, these frontages on Wylie do already benefit from a higher grade topographically (about 15-20 feet higher) than Hulsey Yard across the street.
- 2. MODA Reynoldstown is currently zoned MR-4A, which typically intended for multifamily developments up to 8 stories and therefore not subject to stringent height transitions when adjacent to MRC and similar districts. Given that MODA is only 3 stories, it would be better-protected under MR-2 which accommodates up to 3 story multifamily. MODA is also topographically much lower than Hulsey Yard (roughly 30’ lower), which could exacerbate height transition issues from future density at Hulsey.



If Hulsey Yard was subject to a future standalone overlay zoning district, regulations could be put into place specifically requiring transitional heights to these two areas. However, if Hulsey Yard is subject to a more standard MRC zoning without a standalone overlay, these two areas remain “unprotected”.

Assuming the property owners within these two areas support additional height transitions, it is recommended that the property owners and/or the Hulsey Yard Study Committee engage the City of Atlanta Office of Planning & Development to discuss potential rezonings (and/or additional protections that could be regulated) in advance of a Hulsey Yard rezoning.



The Inman Park / Hulsey “Seam”

Inman Park currently includes a wide variety of underlying zoning districts as well as a Historic Overlay District with three distinct subareas. These regulations were reviewed in the context of the Hulsey Yard Masterplan in order to ensure appropriate transitions and connections between future Hulsey development and Inman Park to its north.

Subarea 1: Inman Park Core District includes the mostly-residential interior of the neighborhood where underlying zoning is predominantly R-5 with a handful of RG-2 and R-LC-zoned parcels. The majority of this “core district” is well over 300 feet from the developable area of Hulsey and is therefore currently well protected in terms of height transitions and adjacencies from Hulsey Yard.

Subarea 2: Dekalb Avenue Corridor Transitional District regulates site controls between Inman Park’s commercial and multifamily parcels fronting Dekalb and adjacent low-density residential parcels (SU1) to their north. The majority of these parcels are comparatively small (under an acre) and building heights are generally limited to 35 feet. The developable area of Hulsey is roughly 150’-200’ from these SU2 parcels, separated by an intervening street (Dekalb Avenue), the MARTA line and the CSX freight rail lines. For these reasons, no additional Subarea 2 regulations are proposed in the context of the masterplan.

Subarea 3: Railroad Corridor Commercial and Industrial Transitional District regulates development of parcels between the neighborhood core and the BeltLine corridor to its west. The SU3 area abutting Hulsey Yard was recently redeveloped as a series of mixed-use and multifamily developments. Although not directly related to Hulsey

Yard, it is worth noting that the term “BeltLine” is not referenced once within the entire Inman Park Historic Overlay District Ordinance (the ordinance was adopted in 2002). While the BeltLine Overlay District does mandate development, it is city-wide, more generic and therefore not necessarily Inman Park-specific. It is therefore recommended that the Inman Park Neighborhood Association (IPNA) pursue a Subarea 3 update (or neighborhood-wide masterplan update) that would include a review/analysis of current regulations in the context of the BeltLine and yield updates that would strengthen BeltLine transitions, improve architectural quality and ensure appropriate connections.

Reconnecting Inman Park and Hulsey Yard

While no major Inman Park-specific regulatory updates are needed related to Hulsey Yard, a key recommendation for IPNA as a partner is to ensure that Inman Park is better-connected to its neighborhoods to the south. While the combined Dekalb Ave/MARTA/CSX corridor “buffers” Inman Park from Hulsey Yard in terms of height transitions, it could serve as a major barrier between Inman Park and future amenities that Hulsey Yard will offer. It is important that IPNA not only support future north-south connections at Delta, Waddell and others, but also ensure that those connections are designed appropriately. These new street and/or trail connections should embrace mobility options and prioritize pedestrian safety while including traffic-calming to/from Inman Park and restricting potential freight and/or service-oriented vehicles from Inman’s narrow residential streets. Ensuring that these new connections are made helps better-manage traffic demands along Dekalb Avenue while ensuring that SU2 commercial establishments continue to thrive.



#yimhy
(yes in my hulsey yard)
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